COUNTRY MUSIC REVIEW

SPECIAL BUMPER ALBUM REVIEW

June 1977 30p

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COUNTRY MUSIC REVIEW

June 1977/Volume 6 No 6

In this month's issue

Three days with the Armadillo/4 Going Dutch/6 Bumper Album Review/7 Mary Reeves Davis/18 Carl Jackson/19 Rhinestone Cowboy/20 I Came To Hear The Music/22 Linda Hargrove/24 Contemporary Cowboy/25 Walt Mills/31 Country Club/33

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Distributed by Concorde Distribution, 10 North Tenter Street, London E1 8DL

Printed by The Chesham Press Ltd., 16 Germain Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Telephone Chesham 4591/2/3.

What a feast of country music appeared on BBC-1 and ITV on Saturday April 23rd; on the former channel we had *The Val Doonican Show*, featuring George Hamilton IV with a pleasing sequence of songs combining his talents with those of the very likeable Val Doonican, whilst ITV's *All You Need Is Love*, in an episode entitled 'Making Moonshine', presented British viewers with 60-minutes of fascinating country music coverage. Tony Palmer, creator of this series on popular music, has been criticised because of alleged inaccuracies and wild statements relating to various aspects of 20th century musical development. Whether this be the case or not, I thoroughly enjoyed this particular episode which traced the roots of American traditional music from the rural mountain communities to modern-day Nashville. The programme's dialogue was handled by artists and those closely connected with the country music industry and it was a joy to watch such notaries as Minnie Pearl, Carl & Pearl Butler, Webb Pierce, Tex Ritter, Roy Rogers, Jimmie Rodgers, George D. Hay, Roy Acuff, The Seldom Scene, Bill Monroe, Jimmie Driftwood, Dorothy Ritter, The Willis Brothers, Carlton Haney, Uncle Dave Macon, Ernest Tubb, Grant Turner, Little Jimmy Dickens and a host of others. Exactly why Palmer chose to dwell so closely on the dubious talents of Benny and Troy Hess wasn't clear. I suppose there is a story to be gleaned from Benny's persistently futile attempts at building his son, Troy, into 'America's youngest recording star' but little was made of the situation and I would rather have listened to more genuine music. Nevertheless, it was a damned good programme and I hope the majority of our readers were fortunate enough to see it.

Getting back to Val Doonican for a moment, it's worth noting how much this genial Irishman is doing for country music in his current series. In addition to featuring such guests as Dennis Weaver, Crystal Gayle, George Hamilton IV and Charley Pride, Val also throws in some pleasant country contributions himself. Well done, Val, You're doing the scene a power of good in your own way. Incidentally, Val Doonican's new album, *Some Of My Best Friends Are Songs* (reviewed in this issue) contains a generous helping of country and country-orientated tracks.

CMR is earning quite a reputation for its forward thinking attitudes just lately and I'm pleased to learn that so many followers of progressive country are using the magazine as a guide to what's happening here, there and everywhere. Pressure of advertising coupled with the Wembley coverage prevented me from including John Marshall's excellent 'Contemporary Cowboy' column last month but John's readers need not despair, it appears in company with June's contribution to make one lengthy contemporary feature. The general flavour of this month's magazine is 'contemporary' or 'progressive' and I hope readers will enjoy the features on Linda Hargrove, Wembley's 3rd day and John Marshall's 'Roundup'.

BRYAN CHALKER

This month's cover
JIM REEVES in a scene from his film 'Kimberley Jim'
cover design/James Hooker

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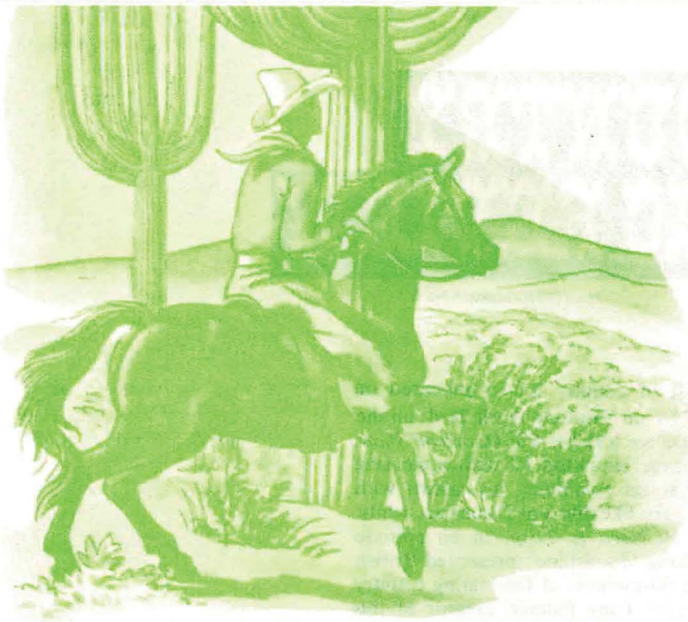
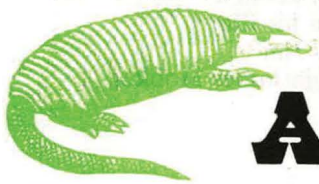


THREE DAYS WITH THE ARMADILLO

by Charlie McKissack



The cab-driver was sceptical. "Progressive Country, huh? Some people round here call it Regressive Country!" I had just arrived in Austin, Texas, and had been trying to explain to the cab-driver the kind of music I was expecting to hear in the city. This was August, 1976, and I was on a three-week Greyhound-bus tour of the U.S., a pilgrimage to the source of the sounds that had been exciting my brain, pulling my heart-strings, and keeping my feet dancing for the past twenty years. I had expected to do Memphis, Chicago, Nashville, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, but at the last minute somebody had recommended Austin, Texas. Austin, Texas? A little investigation revealed the connection between the town and such as Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, and Doug Sahm. Fair enough. For a tripper whose musical honours-list ranged from Josh White through Chuck Berry to Captain Beefheart, or alternatively from Alan Lomax through Buddy Holly to Emmy Lou Harris, the place deserved to be included on the itinerary.

The cab-driver's words seemed to indicate a certain scepticism. I was later to understand how the fierce competition here had led to bitter feelings in the hearts of many of the young men who had rolled into Austin with the tumbleweed over recent years in search of fame and fortune, only to bite the Texas dust. As I left the cab, he explained that he had once been "associated" with a "national" band. I went to bed that night with my musical curiosity nicely whetted by this little conversation, my backside raw from the eighteen-hour bus-ride from New Orleans.

Waking the next morning, the Lone Star Beer sign outside the window of my room proclaims a time of 11.40, a temperature of 96 degrees. I venture out, but even though moving slower than a Texan drawl, I am soaked in sweat after five minutes. I manage to make it to a liquor store, and an electrical-goods store, then retreat to my room, armed with a six-pack of Lone Star and a rented radio. I spend the afternoon in air-conditioned comfort, happily guzzling and listening to the delights of American FM radio, where the DJs make rambling laid-back occasional appearances in an attempt to recall what they've just played in the last long back-to-back sequence. In Austin, the stations to hear are KLBJ-FM, playing rock'n'roll (American definition, that is — Led Zeppelin and Carly Simon, not Bill Haley and Doctor Feelgood); and KOKE-FM, covering progressive/regressive country. While I drink and dig, I watch the Lone Star Beer sign push up the degrees through 98, 99, 100 . . . I cain't harrdly believe it! Finally, around four o'clock, after reaching a staggering 104, it starts to come down again. About six o'clock I figure it's safe to step out again.

The first visit is to the Armadillo World Headquarters. Whatever that may be. I just know it's the place that I've been directed to by the International Hospitality Committee of Austin, and that's been mentioned about every five minutes on the radio all afternoon. Mostly to advertise tonight's act, S.S. Fools. Whoever they may be. I arrive. As the cab crosses a large, dusty vacant lot and pulls up outside a scruffy warehouse, the driver makes the excuse, "'Fraid it looks a little rough!" I think he is referring to the amount on the meter, and mutter something about that being perfectly all right, but when I am out of the car and he's gone, I realise he is referring to the Armadillo. To the average American, it must be a far cry from the typical bar-style club, or purpose-built stadium or concert-hall. To those accustomed to the Roundhouse and Dingwall's, it is not unusual: a long low warehouse, originally an armoury, set in an industrial area away from the downtown and University campus districts.

I join a line of Stetson-hatted, Western-booted long-haired youths and deep-tanned girls in Levi cut-offs, get my hand stamped, and enter. Good Grief! The name of the place is *I Like It Like That*! It's everything I'd always wanted a music-place to be: a dancing-area beneath the stage, flanked by rows of theatre-style seats on either side, a raised tables-and-chairs area at the back, two bars, and complete freedom of movement. Later I discover a beer-garden outside, with alternative entertainment. Though the place is huge, the acoustics and lighting are good, and several monstrous air-conditioners would obviously make for a pleasant atmosphere on a reasonable night, even if they're losing the battle tonight against the unprecedented heat. Even the locals are complaining, and downing an even greater number of pitchers of beer than usual. The band turns out to be "the other half of Three Dog Night" (Why is it that these days nobody seems to be anybody in their own right, but is always ex-somebody else?), and is unremarkable. But I have a pleasant evening, free of aggravation or restriction, and walk back to my room contented, musing on the social significance of such men's room graffiti as "I'll swap two blind crabs for one with no teeth".

The following day, mercifully cooler, I decided to investigate the Austin phenomenon in detail, and presented myself at the Armadillo's business office, where I talked to Carol Fletcher, a young Texan lady with a blue-eyed gaze that made it difficult to concentrate on her words. I asked her about the name. She explained that the armadillo is a shy, peaceful animal, common in the American South-West, most noticeably in the form of squashed remains on the highways, and that an artist named Jim Franklin chose the creature as a motif as it seemed an apt symbol for Texas freaks — persecuted, and unwilling to venture too far from home. That was back around 1968, when Austin was a small college community and the kids were in rock'n'roll. In 1970, due to the combined efforts of Franklin and two other guys, Eddie Wilson amd Mike Tolleson, the Armadillo World Headquarters opened. It was a communal venture from the start — all the staff were involved in every aspect of the planning and construction. The other unusual thing about it was its avowed commitment to the interests of the musicians who played there as well as the audiences and the promoters. This side of the operation had since been streamlined into the *Entertainers' Information Guild*, which claims to "inform, publicise and educate musicians and others in the entertainment field . . . by sharing information and minimizing competition between groups . . . hoping to help its members become gainfully and steadily employed".

The early years of the Armadillo were tough going. They had to weather the stage

when every Texas dude had to come down to show who was still the fastest gun. Now they have tight security, and a good relationship with the local law officers.

An indication of the eventual success of the scheme is the roster of entertainers who have played there, including Doctor John, Captain Beefheart, Van Morrison, Ray Charles, Ravi Shankar. What? Yes, I was quite firmly told by Carol and many others in the town, Austin is not synonymous with country rock only. The policy of the Armadillo, at least, is good music, period. Now that's all very well, I thought to myself as the interview was concluded and I retired to the Armadillo Beer Garden to enjoy the Happy-Hour half-price beer, but I didn't come to Austin to hear Ravi Shankar.

I sat in the eighty-degree shade musing on the whole phenomenon, eavesdropping on two redneck hippies sprawled at the next table. One of them was saying — "Hey listen! I just wrote a song, goes like this —

You just don't understand,
That with a slap of my hand,
I'll have you crying . . . crying!"
They both guffawed loudly.

A group of unkempt young and old men who had been shuffling around a variety of primitive instruments struck up. They were the Austin Jug Band and after kicking off with 'Salty Dog', they ran through a selection of material which in my day we used to call skiffle. This Austin experience was becoming more complex and fascinating by the minute. I left the 'Entertainment Energy Center', and returned to my room for a shower before the major event of the day — Doug Sahm was appearing at Rome Inn.

Now why is it so difficult to see good live music in the U.K. under reasonable circumstances? This thought came to me as I sat at my table at Rome Inn, having paid a moderate cover charge, with a pitcher of beer before me, listening to the warm-up singer for Sir Doug. None of the coldness of the concert hall, the outrageous prices of the Ronnie Scott's style club, the discomfort of pub-rock, or the ear-splitting agony of the disco.

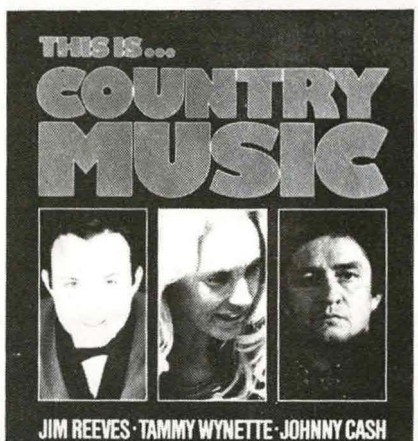
Doug played a brilliant set, ranging from 'Mendocino' to 'Satisfaction' to his latest single at that time, 'I Love The Way You Love The Way I Love You'. And then things really began to happen. He brought on to the stage a contrasting couple of fiddle-players. I had never heard of Alvin Crow or J. R. Shadwell, but judging by the wild response of the audience, this crew-cut kid and this shaky old man are famous figures in Austin. And so they should be. The combination of their Bob Wills-style playing and Doug's band's solid rhythms was a very happy mix.

My memory is hazy about the rest of the evening, as the Lone Star beer was starting to get through . . . all I remember is a stage packed with fiddle players; snatches of lyrics like "beautiful Texas sunshine" and "take me back to Austin, I'm too young to marry"; a long-haired vision of Texas beauty named Sal who in her role as waitress kept supplying me with free beer when she found I was "Briddish"; whooping yelling Texans stomping the floor; and through it all the manic diminutive figure of Sir Doug, clad in Stetson, denims, shades, boots and bandanna, somehow marshalling this beery chaos into a magical musical tour-de-force.

The third night I took in the Lost Gonzos band at Castle Creek. Research since my return to the U.K. has revealed that this band is led by Gary Nunn, who in turn has connections with Michael Murphey and Jerry Jeff Walker. But all that is a matter of being wise after the event. At the time it was a matter of another glorious evening of great country-rock and wild excitement.

In a way, I wish I'd read Jan Reid's excellent book on Austin, "The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock", before I went, but to arrive in Austin in a state of ignorant expectance as I did is possibly the best way to do it. That way you feel the full amazing effect of the place. I was only able to scratch the surface of this town that eats, sleeps and breathes music — there were still dozens of small clubs featuring good bands left unexplored, and a whole wealth of other musical avenues still to follow. Comparisons are obvious with such legendary spots as New Orleans, Liverpool, Greenwich Village and Richmond in their respective heydays, and we all know that none of those unique atmospheres survived for long, so if you're going to Austin, you better be quick. You bet!

(Charlie McKissack is an assistant on *'Honky Tonk'*, the popular BBC Radio London programme presented by Charlie Gillett).



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Written by Bryan Chalker

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Going Dutch

De Schaapskooi, Odiliapeel, Holland

In addition to making numerous guest appearances at clubs and theatres throughout the British Isles this year, I have also travelled to Germany, Belgium and Holland. It's been a busy period but one that I wouldn't have missed for anything. I was amazed to find how well country music has been accepted on the Continent and in Holland, in particular, a healthy scene is growing. The focal point of Dutch country music seems to be a venue in the little town of Odiliapeel called De Schaapskooi which, translated, means 'cattle pen' or 'corral'.

On February 3rd I travelled with my band, The New Frontier, to Odiliapeel, to appear in a special country music show to be recorded by Dutch radio (TROS). Sharing the bill with us were two very popular Dutch groups, Colt 45 and Saskia & Serge.

The journey through Belgium and Holland was extremely pleasant and I was impressed by the genuine warmth and friendliness of the Dutch people. Belgium is, of course, an old stamping ground of mine and I have made many good friends there over the years but it is not such a physically attractive country as its close neighbour, Holland. On the way to Odiliapeel, we passed by many picturesque canals and medieval Dutch towns and villages. Although most of Holland is very flat — much of it being below sea-level — the land is well tended and scrupulously neat.

We arrived at De Schaapskooi at mid-day and were greeted by Nellie van den Biggelaar, wife of the venue's genial host, Jan. Within minutes of unloading our suitcases we were enjoying splendid Dutch food and beer and listening to Colt 45 and Saskia & Serge rehearsing their material for the evening's concert.

De Schaapskooi is a modern venue but, because of Jan van den Biggelaar's love of genuine antiques, it retains a traditional Dutch flavour, the interior resembling an American prairie 'schooner'.

We were invited to stay at De Schaapskooi for four days, using it as a base for other appearances in Holland. Jan and Nellie van den Biggelaar's hospitality was overwhelming and the food would have put Simpson's of The Strand to shame. From the minute we arrived at the club, I knew the whole tour was going to be a success — and it was.

Gerard de Vries, of TROS, compered the evening's entertainment and the audience of 200 enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Fortunately, there was no language barrier, as the majority of Dutch people speak good English and their knowledge of country music, both Old-Time and Modern, is quite staggering. Although the concert officially ended at midnight, it was many hours before we finally crawled into our beds suffering from an excess of strong Dutch lager and superb food. Jan generously allows each musician six beer tokens for the evening but he delights in pushing the boat out every fifteen minutes between 'official' drinks. Various members of the audience are also prone to sending up trays of beer with alarming regularity and on February 4th De Schaapskooi closely resembled a miniature beer festival.

Jan van den Biggelaar has been staging country music shows at his club for the past seven years and his reputation for overwhelming hospitality has travelled the length and breadth of Holland. When De Schaapskooi isn't being used as Holland's premier country music venue, it functions as a restaurant, disco and general meeting place but even then you can hear country music issuing forth from the various loudspeakers attached to the walls and ceiling.

During that particular evening I spoke to Cor Sanne, the Dutch agent responsible for our tour, and two friends from Belgium, Luc Veereman and Jules Couschier.

"I am absolutely appalled at the low fees paid to bands playing English clubs", said Cor. "We would never dream of paying our acts that kind of money; they wouldn't go out for it."

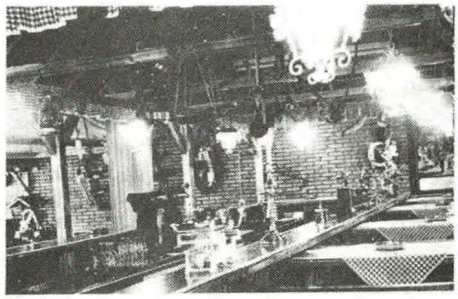
Luc and Jules agreed but added that the scene in Belgium wasn't as healthy as it could be owing to that country's severe financial recession. Nevertheless, the situation was beginning to improve.

Dutch country groups have managed to develop a nice, easy-going sound and, whilst their vocalists tend to make literal translations of everything — often resulting in hilarious bloomers — the music is pleasant to listen to and totally undemanding. Colt 45, for example, are very relaxed on stage and they have built up a large and loyal following over the years. Saskia & Serge, on the other hand, have only recently changed from pop to country but already they have scored heavily with Dutch audiences.

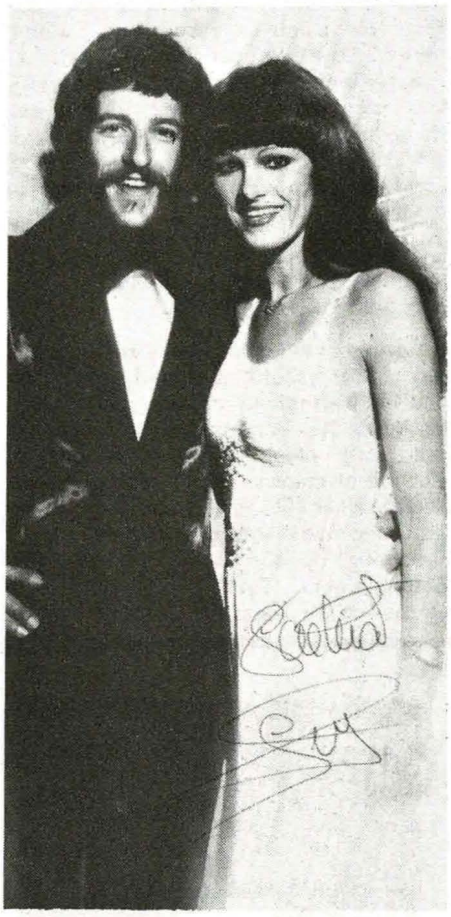
Within the next two or three years Dutch and Belgium country music is going to be a force to be reckoned with and credit for this must go to people like Jan and Nellie van den Biggelaar, Cor Sanne, Gerard De Vries, Luc Veereman and Jules Couschier.

No feature on De Schaapskooi would be complete without reference to Jan and Nellie's lovable old heap of a dog, Arno — the friendliest, soppiest 'guard' dog I have ever met!

Jan van den Biggelaar would like to hear from other British groups but those applying should be sure to send photographs and albums. Jan's address is: De Schaapskooi, Oude Dijk 47a, Odiliapeel, Holland.



De Schaapskooi's interior and main bar



Saskia & Serge

Nellie van den Biggelaar is flanked by two willing helpers

by Bryan Chalker

BUMPER ON RECORD EDITION

Album of the month

SMOKEY MOUNTAIN MEMORIES
Roy Acuff (2-LP set)
DJM DJD 28034

Wabash Connonball; Once More; I Don't Care (If You Don't Love Me); I Saw The Light; Come And Knock (On The Door Of My Heart); Low An Lonely; Don't Make Me Go To Bed And I'll Be Good; Streamlined Cannonball; Don't Know Why; Somebody Touched Me; Sweeter Than The Flowers; The Wreck On The Highway; Life To Go; Tennessee Central (Number 9); Don't Tell Mama; Lord, Build Me A Cabin In Glory; Willie Roy, The Crippled Boy; That Glory Bound Train; Great Speckled Bird; The Wreck Of The Old 97; They'll Never Take Her Love From Me; Mansion On The Hill; The Old Age Pension Cheque; Life's Railway To Heaven; The Great Titanic; My Pal Of Yesterday; Thank God; Old Time Sunshine Song; A Satisfied Mind; Each Season Changes You; Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain; Would You Care; Small Country Towns; Radio Station S-A-V-E-D; Take Me Home Country Roads; Smoky Mountain Memories.

According to Wesley Rose, whom I spoke to at Wembley, Acuff is delighted with this latest *DJM* release, and so he should be. Compiler Tony Byworth has put together a magnificent testimony of Acuff's contributions to country music and it cannot fail to please the traditionalists and relative newcomers to the more ethnic sounds of country music. The career of Roy Acuff has been well documented in *Country Music Review* and all I need to say is that if your interests lie in the historic development of the genre, this album is essential to your collection.

Acuff's potted life-story is set out in Byworth's excellent liner-notes and the centre-spread of the gatefold sleeve contains full details of the musicians employed on the 36 tracks, plus a rare Grand Old Opry photograph of Roy.

Highly recommended.

BRYAN CHALKER

RIDES AGAIN
Johnny Bond
Shasta LP 516 (American Issue)

Oklahoma Hills; Tomorrow Never Comes; I'll Step Aside; I Wonder Where You Are Tonight; Red River Valley; Rainbow At Midnight; Hot Rod Lincoln; Fort Worth Jail; Cimarron; Time Changes Everything; Oklahoma Waltz.

September 3rd, 4th and 5th 1974 were the dates that these songs were recorded for the *Jimmy Wakely* label. The overall sound is that of a budget studio session. However there are far worse fully filled out sessions than this one. Jimmy Wakely plays piano throughout and very good it is too, adding the honky tonk sound very well to Red Rhodes steel, and slotting in well with him, is the one and only James Burton on lead. Stan Pulsis the bass player for the session and the background vocals are kept in the Wakely family with his wife Inez, daughter Linda and son Johnny to add to his own. The voices are used sparingly, which is a blessing.

Some really nice touches of lead and steel can be heard on 'Time Changes Everything'. 'Fort Worth Jail' is one of two tracks that most people won't have, as it was last recorded in 1972 for Starday but never issued; the other is 'I'll Step Aside' which was written in 1945 and last recorded by Johnny for the Mercury label, between his Columbiadays and joining Starday in 1960. If you feel like renewing your old recordings of these fine songs, then now is the time to do it as there is no telling when releases like this will come along again. Produced by Jimmy Wakely for Jimmy Wakely label, this is a highly recommended package and shows Jimmy Bond still has a good voice.

DON PAGE

A RUMOR IN MY OWN TIME
Steven Fromholz
Capitol ST 11521 (American Issue)

Ain't It Nice To Be Alone; Blue Lines On White Linen; She's A Lady; Hobo Bob; Dear Darcie; Bears; I'd Have To Be Crazy; Knockin' On Wood; Can't Stay Away; Late Nite Neon Shadows.

Yet another 'new' name is that of singer-songwriter Steve Fromholz and for a debut album this is most impressive. The backup sounds are very country, whilst Steve's voice contains much of the quality and folksy lightness associated with Dave Loggins and Steve Goodman. His songs are good and I predict a bright future for him. Among the sidemen are: John Sebastian, Mickey Raphael, Willie Nelson, Red Rhodes, Kenny Altman and Randy Beavers.

Produced by Roger Harris and Donald Williams

MARTIN MARRIOTT

DIANA WILLIAMS
Capitol ST 11587 (American Issue)

Teddy Bear's Last Ride; Loving Of Your Life; Be Careful Of Stones That You Throw; Old Fashioned Love Song; Little One; Storm In Tupelo; Tell Me Again; Avery; Someday She'll Lose You To Me; Hold On To A Dream.

Coming across as a kind of third-rate Lucy the Drifter, even including the old Hank Williams monologue 'Stones', she is obviously restricted in her output and appeal, and the situation is hardly improved on the few occasions she actually tries to sing. I think maybe she should join Teddy Bear!

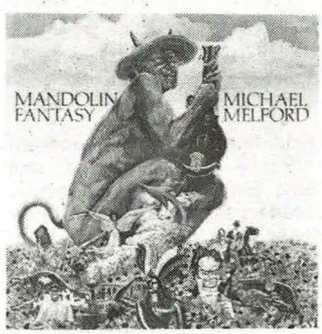
Produced by Bill Denny

MIKE STAVELEY

MANDOLIN FANTASY
Michael Melford

Flying Fish 023 (*American Issue*)

Devil's Dream; Black Eyed Susie; Georgia Camp Meeting; Train, Train; Sonatina In C Major; Omie Wise; Sweet Georgia Brown; Country Boy; Rosalee McFall; Lost Indian; Gnossienne.



The mandoline, to give it the correct spelling, derived from a lute-like instrument called the *Mandora*, originated in Italy during the second half of the eighteenth century. The mandolin(e) occurred in various forms, the most popular being the *Neopolitan* and *Milanese* styles. However, the style of instrument favoured by country musicians developed from a combination of the *Neopolitan* mandolin, with its gourd-shaped body, and a Spanish instrument known as a *bandurria*.

Bill Monroe has been widely acknowledged as country music's most brilliant mandolinist, although perhaps others would argue that he has been superceded by younger men. Certainly artists like Jesse McReynolds and Norman Blake have done much to popularise the instrument in more recent years but it has taken a musician like Michael Melford, better known for his production work with the *Flying Fish* label, to fully appreciate the wide scope of the mandolin. His album is technically brilliant and after a clever and note-perfect reading of the traditional fiddle piece, 'Devil's Dream', quickly moves on from the fairly restrictive patterns of Bluegrass and into broader realms.

Fortunately, Melford hasn't fallen into a self-indulgent trap, like so many modern instrumentalists, and his album combines technical achievements and instrumental virtuosity with solid entertainment. It would be difficult to define the album as purely 'country', because Melford's style is fluid enough to venture further afield, as he does on 'Sonatina In C Major' and 'Gnossienne' but there's still a lot of country to sate the appetites of the average instrumental buffs.

Highly recommended.

Produced by Michael Melford.

BRYAN CHALKER

THE ORIGINAL JERRY LEE LEWIS
Charly CR 30111

Crazy Arms; End Of The Road; It'll Be Me; Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On; You Win Again; Great Balls Of Fire; Down The Line; Breathless; High School Confidential; Fools Like Me; Break Up; I'll Make It All Up To You; Lovin' Up A Storm; Big Blon' Baby; Livin' Lovin' Wreck; What I'd Say.

Despite the good service being provided by this series, each album so far seems to have one irritating feature — on this one, it happens to concern the track 'It'll Be Me'. For some reason, best known to himself, Jerry Lee recorded two versions of the song

for *Sun* — one appeared here as the flip-side of 'Shakin' (HLS 8457), the other as a track on his first album. Now, for some reason best known to themselves, most companies involved in the re-release of his material seem to choose the latter (undoubtedly inferior and, at half-tempo, nowhere near as exciting as its counterpart) for their compilations and, unfortunately, this company have made the same mistake. I'm completely at a loss to understand the motives for this, and would certainly welcome a suitable explanation — if one exists!

You may consider mine a petty complaint, but when the song (in its true form) happens to be one of the finest he's ever recorded, I consider its 'dismissal' to be totally relevant and absolutely unforgivable. Of course, this may not be a stumbling block for everyone and, as collections go, it certainly is the most concise and comprehensive one available, giving the buyer an ideal opportunity to house all of his best-known recordings under one 'roof' — with the exception, of course, of 'It'll Be Me'. . . .

MIKE STAVELEY

AMERICAN FLYER
United Artists UAG 29991

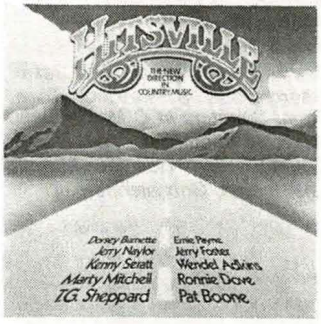
Light Of Your Love; Such A Beautiful Feeling; Back in '57; Lady Blue Eyes; Let Me Down Easy; The Woman In Your Heart; Love Has No Pride; Queen Of All My Days; Drive Away; Call Me, Tell Me; End Of A Love Song.

Certainly a glittering array of star names on this debut release. Aside from such guests as Rusty Young, Byrone Berline and Larry Carlton, we find that the band itself contains such 'exiles' as Craig Fuller (from Pure Prairie League) and Steve Katz (from BS & T and Blues Project), all under the guiding hand of America/Beatles producer George Martin. The songs come from all of the respective members, the most notable, of course, being the Linda Ronstadt hit, 'Love Has No Pride'. Nevertheless, the union is somewhat of a Humpty Dumpty situation (i.e. untogether) and all the king's horses, etc. What's more, Martin is completely wrong for the project, bogging the whole set down in a succession of puerile *MOR* arrangements. Apart from that . . .

MIKE STAVELEY

HITSVILLE: THE NEW DIRECTION IN COUNTRY MUSIC
Hitsville HVS 3001

Tryin' To Beat The Mornin' Home (T. G. Sheppard); Is This All There Is To A Honky Tonk? (Jerry Naylor); Texas Moon (Wendall Adkins); Please Come To Nashville (Ronnie Dove); Devil Woman (Marty Mitchell); May I Spend Every New Years With You (T. G. Sheppard); I'd Do It With You (Pat Boone and Shirley Boone); I Knew You When (Jerry Foster); Talk To Jeanette (Ernie Payne); Things (Ronnie Dove); Another Woman (T. G. Sheppard); My Eyes Adored You (Marty Mitchell); Texas Woman (Pat Boone); Let's Hold On To What We've Got (Kenny Seratt); Right Or Wrong (Ronnie Dove); Solitary Man (T. G. Sheppard); The Last Time You Love Me (Jerry Naylor); Ain't No Heartbreak (Dorsey Burnette).



Aside from the rather excellent tracks by T. G. Sheppard (real name Bill Browder), the album doesn't possess too much substance and if this is the 'new direction' to be taken by *Motown's* newly-formed country label, I don't hold out too much hope for the future. As wallpaper music goes, I guess it's OK, but for liner-note writer Tony Byworth to suggest that the release "adds up to a new concept in country music" falls only slightly short of ludicrous; there ain't nuthin' new here, me boy; this kind of stuff has been churned out for years. . . .

Getting back to the excellent T. G. Sheppard — you'll find all but one of the cuts here included on his first UK album release, 'Nashville Hitmaker'. Now, that's a far better prospect.

BRYAN CHALKER

TOMPALL GLASER & HIS OUTLAW BAND
ABC ABCL 5211

You Can Have Her; Release Me; Tennessee Blues; Come Back Shane; It'll Be Her; It Ain't Fair Medley; Sweethearts Or Strangers; Let My Fingers Do The Walking; I Just Want To Hear The Music.

Well, this is incredible — no, I don't mean the record, I mean the fact that an artist of Tompall's reputation and standing can have favoured, let alone participated in, the production of such a painfully poor and abysmally amateurish album!

For some reason, he's completely forsaken all the beautiful vocal and harmony work so much his trademark, has decided to sing most of the numbers in too low a key, and surrounded himself with a group of musicians (drummer Charles Polk in particular) who wouldn't even do *'Opportunity Knocks'* justice!

Apart from Bobby Charles' 'Tennessee Blues', the arrangements chosen (especially an horendous torch-blues reading of 'Release Me') defy all understanding, and mainly seem just to drain each song of its melody. What more can I say?

Produced by Ken Mansfield and Tompall Glaser.

MIKE STAVELEY

THE WAY THEY WERE BACK WHEN
Various Artists
Shasta LP 517 (American Issue)

Detour; Too Late; With Tears In My Eyes; These Hands; Sweet Mama, Treetop Tall; Love Letters In The Sand; Dusty Skies; Nine Pound Hammer; Won't You Ride In My Little Red Wagon; The Streets Of Laredo.

What a fine collection of material for the serious collector of recorded history. These are excerpts recorded on the Jimmy Wakely show from 1952 through to 1958 and include Jimmy Wakely's edited introduction and audience response. Believe it or not the music still sounds good today, it will certainly interest more than Western Swing Fans. Considering the age of the recordings and the quality of equipment as against today's sophisticated magic boxes, the clarity is excellent. Jimmy Wakely, Wes Tuttle and Merle Travis open up the album with a trio version of 'Detour'. Jimmy carries on with 'Too Late' though there are breaks between song and intro for the next number it is not too dis-jointed thereby you hardly realise that items are extracts from different shows over the six years. One of the most outstanding tracks is without doubt 'With Tears In My Eyes' a very fine vocal from Wesley Tuttle.

Side two opens with Johnny Bond bringing the first chuckle to the proceedings and singing that old character actor Lassels White song 'Sweet Mama, Treetop Tall' and really making a fine job of it. The next chuckle comes from Hank Penny, this is the first time that I have been aware that he is such a comedian, not the usual inane type of humour that we usually hear, but using a play on words in a dialect similar to the East Anglian dialect, finishing his spot with 'Won't You Ride In My Little Red Wagon'. I recommend this album to all serious collectors and to others for the historical value.

DON PAGE

Great Albums from the past

By Bryan Chalker
TENNESSEE GUITAR
Various Artists
Starday SLP 176
(American Issue)

Bee Byrd Bounce (Billy Byrd & Jimmy Capps); The Natchez Trace (Jimmy Capps); Blue Guitar (Hardrock Gunter); Country Boogie (Eddie Eddings); Gibson Girl (Billy Byrd); Memphis (Hardrock Gunter); Springfield Guitar Social (Thumbs Carlisle); Sugarfoot (Arthur 'Guitar Boogie' Smith); Nashville Shuffle (Jimmy Capps); Raggin' The Guitar (Hardrock Gunter); Chattanoogie Bound (Jimmy Capps); Teenage Blues (Billy Byrd); Skip Along (Tommy Hill); After Hours Guitar (Hardrock Gunter).

Copies of this trend-setting album found their way into the UK at the beginning of the Sixties and it has since become a much sought-after item. *Starday* were responsible for some of the finest country music ever recorded during their prime years. Perhaps the most famous of their releases were the sixteen volumes of *'Country Music Hall Of Fame'* but, destined to become a rare classic was the superlative *'Tennessee Guitar'*. At the time of its release the album was little appreciated outside of the then fairly narrow country music circles and it was hardly a runaway success. Years later, however, its artistic and historic value have become appararent and *'Tennessee Guitar'* stands as a monument to the country guitarists of the Fifties and Sixties. Most of the present generation of country fans will be familiar with the names featured throughout the album but few will have actually heard their work. It shouldn't be missed and each track could serve as a tutor for present-day pickers. From time to time copies do turn up in auction lists and in cheapo racks and if the opportunity presents itself, grab one, maybe two copies, and savour the delights of a bygone era of country music.

So many of the guitarists herein were grossly underrated during their day and it almost borders on tragedy to realise that now nostalgic trends are creating a demand for early country, this is no longer available. Harold 'Hardrock' Gunter became extremely popular for a period and achieved great success with 'Birmingham Bounce' but, by the time *Tennessee Guitar* reached the record stores, he was working as an insurance salesman. Gunter's contributions to this collection are excellent and I trust that one day his true worth as an innovative guitarist will be fully realised. Thumbs Carlisle's 'Springfield Guitar Social' was a classic before it became a feature of this album. It was a clever piece of work in which Carlisle duplicated the styles of numerous other pickers, aside from his own.

The great days of *Starday* are over but countless thousands of fans the world over will remember fondly those gaudy looking sleeves that housed so many country music gems. *'Tennessee Guitar'* was one of *Starday's* real jewels.

CAN'T YOU REMEMBER THE CAROLINE TAR HEELS
Bear Family 15507

Her Name Was Hula Lou; I'm Going To Georgia; Goodbye My Bonnie Goodbye; Shanghai In China; My Mama Scolds Me For Flirting; When The Good Lord Sets Me Free; Can't You Remember When Your Heart Was Mine; You're A Little Too Small; I'll Be Washed; Bring Me A Leaf From The Sea; Peg And Awl; She Wouldn't Be Still; Roll On Daddy Roll On; The Apron String Blues; Got The Farmland Blues; There Ain't No Use Working So Hard.

Clarence Ashley, Dock Walsh and Garley Foster were known collectively as The Carolina Tar Heels. The name was given to the group by Ralph Peer and was originally used as a 'blanket' for Dock Walsh and Gwen Foster, who recorded for Peer and *Victor* in 1927. Walsh and Foster, together with two other musicians, had auditioned for Peer as The Yellowjackets but only the two former were considered suitable for the session. Six months after the Victor session, both men went their separate ways and Dock Walsh teamed up with Garley Foster ('The Human Bird') and created a new Carolina Tar Heels band. Gwen Foster, an accomplished guitarist and harmonica player, further his musical career with various other bands. For a brief period the Tar Heels boasted Clarence Ashley in their ranks and between 1928 and 1929 they recorded seventeen titles. Ashley left the group following these sessions and the Tar Heels continued as a duo. The economic crisis of the Thirties proved too much for them, however, and Walsh and Foster were forced to seek more secure means of employment.

This excellent compilation originating from the *Folk Variety* catalogue is a fascinating insight into the music of a rather revolutionary string band and, whilst the overall sound quality is scratchy and erratic, there is a great deal of enjoyment to be derived from the songs. I was particularly interested to hear 'Goodbye My Bonnie Goodbye', the melody of which forms the basis of the possibly more familiar, 'I'm Leavin' On The Wagon Train', written and recorded by Jimmie Driftwood on his superlative *The Westward Movement* album. Doc Walsh's banjo work was far in advance of its time and his three-finger style of picking no doubt influenced future Bluegrass musicians. Garley Foster's bluesy harmonica style was also ahead of its time and present-day harpists could glean one or two points from the various tracks on the album.

Recommended to serious students of Country music.

GERRY WORTHINGTON

NOVELTY GUITAR INSTRUMENTALS
Various Artists
Sonet SNKF 117

Bowery Buck (Dick Fergy); Cataract Rag (Lasse Johansson & Claes Palmquist); Circus Time (Tim Nicolai); Sensation-A Rag (Bob Evans); T.N.T. (Ton Van Bergeyk); Junk Man Rag (Lasse Johansson); Colored Aristocracy (Dave Laibman); Bohemian Rag (Tony Marcus); By A Waterfall (Ton Van Bergeyk); Ragtime Nightingale (Lasse Johansson & Claes Palmquist); Dallas Rag (Dave Laibman); Plymouth House (Tim Nicolai); Fizz Water (Lasse Johansson); Harlem Rag (Bob Evans); Joe Rag (Jim McLennan); Boys, My Money's All Gone (Dave Laibman).

FINGER PICKING RAGS & OTHER DELIGHTS
Dale Miller
Sonet SNKF 110

Sweet Georgia Brown; Stagger Lee; God Bless The Child; Cheap Wine; Chatanooga Choo Choo; Boys From Blue Hill; Inflation Blues; Bicycle Built For Two/Sidewalks Of New York; Air On A G String; Too Tite Rag; Amtrack Shuffle; Pitchel Theme; Blue Prelude; Take It On The Run; Nice Work If You Can Get It; Son Of Diddie; Birth Of The Blues; Shelley's Swing; Fleabites; Hey Jude; Little Fugue.

Two excellent guitar albums from *Sonet* and culled from the interesting *Kicking Mule Records* catalogue. An absolute *must* for those keen to advance their instrumental techniques but equally important to readers who like good music played by wizards of the strings. There's not too much I can say about the albums because they aren't strictly *Country* but they are worth investigation.

Produced by Stefan Grossman & Ed Denson respectively.

ALAN PETTIFER

BROTHER JUKE BOX
Don Everly
DJM DJF 20501

Brother Juke Box; Love At Last Sight; So Sad; Lettin' Go; Since You Broke My Heart; Never Like This; Deep Water; Yesterday Just Passed My Way Again; Oh, I'd Like To Go Away; Oh, What A Feeling; Turn The Memories Loose Again.

'So Sad' is a highly evocative title that aptly reflects the break-up of the Everly Brothers but, after a lengthy hiatus, it's certainly good to see Don Everly back on record and, with some of the old titles filling out his repertoire, he obviously finds it just as hard to completely remove himself from the ties of yesterday.

I just wish I could get equally excited about the record itself — nice songs and solid vocals, but no real spark or magic — the whole exercise seems to be too matter-of-fact, and never really takes off. Best cut is 'Never Like This' from Tupper Saussy of the much-underrated Neon Philharmonic.

Produced by Wesley Rose.

MIKE STAVELEY

CB SPECIAL
Dick Curless
MB 313 (Non-retail)

The White Knight; Big Wheel Cannonball; I've Come Awful Close; Truck Driver's Queen; Six Days On The Road; The Lonesome Road; Blazin' Smokestack; Old Home Filler-Up An' Keep On A-Truckin' Cafe; Truck Drivin' Son-Of-A-Gun; Wolf Creek Pass; Convoy; Truck Drivin' Man; Pinball Machine; King Of The Open Road; Movin' On; A Tombstone Every Mile; Look At That Rain; Truck Stop; Give Me 40 Acres; Me And Ole CB.

A cheque or postal order for £2.95 to *Teledisc Offers, Dacrop Limited, 47b Welbeck Street, London, W1M 7HE,* will secure a copy of this excellent 'trucker's special' advertised recently on ITV. Featuring the considerable talents of the much-neglected Dick Curless, backed up by Curtis McPeake (banjo picker with Danny Davis & The Nashville Brass) and The Nashville Pickers, it's an excellent recording which settles nicely into the true country music vein after a rather limp opening track. Dobro and banjo predominate the overall sound and Dick's deep, bass voice is perfectly suited to these masculine songs of the open road.

Curless, a veteran of the Korean War, has enjoyed a big following amongst America's trucking fraternity since 1965, when he took 'A Tombstone Every Mile' into the *Billboard* Hot 100 country charts. He was successful until 1971, when illness threatened to ruin his career and, for the past few years, his record releases have dwindled. This new compilation, featuring a handful of his old hits, could indicate a Curless revival and I hope that UK fans will take the opportunity of obtaining the album before it is deleted.

Excellent value and good country music.

BRYAN CHALKER

BLUES AND BLUEGRASS
The Dixie Gentlemen with Tut Taylor
Old Homestead OHS 90024
(American Issue)

How Many Hearts Have You Broken; Flint River Ramble; The Waves Of Sorrow; Little Green Pill; Dixie Ride; Soldier's Return; Riding To Rimrock; Your Heart Tells The Truth; Pine Lake Picking; Orange Blossom Special; Picking Peanuts; Running Wild.

Recorded in 1966 and released by *Old Homestead* in 1973, *Blues*

And Bluegrass is one of those obscurities well worth checking out. The vocals are easy flowing and well into the vein of tradition mountain music, whilst Taylor's Dobro playing adds a certain lilt that reminded me rather of Hylo Brown's old Timberliners group. The fiddling is handled by no less than Vassar Clements and the remainder of the lineup comprises Jesse Handley (bass), Jake Landers (guitar), Herschel Sizemore (mandolin) and Rual Yarbrough (banjo). A thoroughly enjoyable album.

ROBERT PAVLOW

TORN BETWEEN TWO LOVERS
Mary MacGregor
Ariola America AAS 1504

Mama; This Girl; Good Together; It's Too Soon; Why Did You Wait; The Lady I Am; For A While; I Just Want To Love You; Take Your Love Away; Torn Between Two Lovers.

One by one, Peter Paul and Mary have each faded into the background, but now Peter Yarrow has emerged from the shadows to act as mentor and guiding light to new thrush Mary MacGregor. The overall result is very much Livvy-styled country with class, her one shortcoming being a rather bland delivery at times — it's really nice to hear her cut loose on a number like 'It's Too Soon'.

Those of you who follow the powerful series 'Rich Man Poor Man' will recognise the opening song as that used by Billy Abbott's protegee in her recording session, although I believe the actual version used in the programme is by Jennifer Warne which is, as yet, unavailable in this country. All in all, a very relaxing and entertaining performance.

Produced by Peter Yarrow and Barry Beckett

MIKE STAVELEY

REFLECTING
Johnny Rodriguez
Mercury SRM 1-1110
(Special Import)

I Wonder If I Ever Said Goodbye; Louisiana; I've Had All The Hurt I Can Take; It Was; Commonly Known As The Blues; Red, Wine And Blue; Hillbilly Heart; Lyin' Eyes; Poison Red Berries; There'll Always Be Honky Tonks In Texas; Desperado.

Rodriguez is just the kind of artist who appeals to the ladies and his new album should place him back at the top of the popularity stakes. Tasteful arrangements and nicely subdued vocalising has become his trademark and whilst more than a few critics predicted a swift demise following Rodriguez' initial hits, he has proved extremely durable. His kind of relaxed Country style is back in fashion at present and MOR fans will like what he has to offer here.
A worthwhile investment.

Produced by Jerry Kennedy.
ALAN PETTIFER

THE COUNTRY AMERICA LOVES
The Statler Brothers
Mercury SRM 1-1125
(American Issue)

The Movies; Let It Show; All I Can Do; You Could Be Coming To Me; Hat And Boots; I Was There; Thank God I've Got You; Blue Eyes Cryin' In The Rain; Somebody New Will Be Coming Along; You Comb Her Hair Every Morning; A Couple More Years.

The Statlers maintain the usual high standard that we've come to expect over the years, although there's nothing to make you sit up with surprise. Technically the quartet has achieved perfection with their vocal arrangements and Jerry Kennedy's production keeps the whole thing flowing nicely.
Not a knock-out album by any stretch of the imagination but most enjoyable, nevertheless.

MARTIN MARRIOTT

GOLDEN RING
George Jones & Tammy Wynette
Epic 81568

Golden Ring; Even The Bad Times Are Good; Near You; Cryin' Time; I've Seen Better Days; Did You Ever?; Tattletale Eyes; I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me); If You Don't, Somebody Else Will; Keep The Change.

Once the excellent 'Golden Ring' has faded into the distance the album takes on a rather couldn't-care-less-if-we-finish-it-or-not flavour and much of it is so low-keyed as to make one think that it's a re-issue of much earlier material. Of course, many of the songs have stood the test of time but they don't exactly sound revitalised and *alive* with the Jones/Wynette treatment. Not one of the couple's best efforts.

Produced by Billy Sherrill
BRYAN CHALKER

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11 MONTHS AND 29 DAYS
John Austin Paycheck
Epic KE 33943
(American Issue)

11 Months And 29 Days; The Woman Who Put Me Here; The Feminine Touch; I Sleep With Her Memory Every Night; I Can See Me Lovin' You Again; Gone At Last; Closer Than I've Ever Been Before; I've Seen Better Days; Live With Me ('Til I Can Learn To Live Again); That's What The Outlaws In Texas Want To Hear.

A switch of names from Johnny Paycheck to John Austin Paycheck has brought a rather impressive change of style with it. Paycheck was always an intense, meaningful singer but here he injects more soul than I've ever heard before and although some of the almost R&B backings take a little getting used to, the album is a minor triumph. Released following the announcement that Paycheck was broke and in debt to the tune of thousands of dollars, the album should have helped to re-establish his financial status by now. I hope so; he's far too good an artist to be allowed to drift into the doldrums. Packs a lot of cross-over appeal but straight country freaks may shy away.

Produced by Billy Sherrill.
BRUCE ANDERSON

HOTEL CALIFORNIA
Eagles
Asylum K 53031

Hotel California; New Kid In Town; Life In The Fast Lane; Wasted Time; Wasted Time (Reprise); Victim Of Love; Pretty Maids All In A Row; Try And Love Again; The Last Resort.

Those fans who rave over groups like the Eagles would do well to listen to some *real* Country music and they'd soon realise that what these Rock-groups-turned-on-to-Country have to offer is hardly totally original. Maybe the blending and fusion of styles is a little different but Country music, taken as a whole, hasn't exactly stood still. When people ask me if I've heard the fantastic music of ZZ Top, New Riders Of The Purple Sage, etc., I'm tempted to ask if they, in turn, have listened to The Louvin Brothers, Doc Watson, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson and others like them. OK, I'm biased, but there are far too many groups jumping on the Country bandwagon these days and I'd like to see a little more credit given to the stars of Country music.
If you're looking for cuts like 'Lyin' Eyes' and other previous Country-orientated Eagles music — forget it. They've branched out more since then and whilst I don't doubt the overall popularity of the album, it won't have the same lasting appeal.

Produced by Bill Szymczyk.
BRUCE ANDERSON

THE BEST OF FLOYD TILLMAN
Columbia KC 34334 (American Issue)

Slippin' Around; I Love You So Much It Hurts; It Had To Be That Way; I Gotta Have My Baby Back; This Cold War With You; I'm Falling For You; I Finally Saw The Light; A Small Little Town; I Love You Just As You Are; I'll Never Be The Same Without You.

Floyd Tillman is probably better known for his song writing abilities than for his singing prowess but one or two fans may recall his old Allegro (Hallmark) LP of a few years back entitled simply 'Floyd Tillman'.
Floyd's biggest years as a recording artist spanned the Forties, when he took songs like 'They Took The Stars Out Of Heaven' (*1944*), 'I Love You So Much It Hurts' (*1948*) and 'Slippin' Around' (*1949*) into the Country Music charts. The latter title is possibly Floyd's best-known song and among the other artists to have recorded it over the years are Ernest Tubb and Jimmy Wakely and Margaret Whiting.
'The Best of Floyd Tillman', with its suggestions of Western-Swing, is an enjoyable excursion into the world of one of Country's most likeable writers.

MARTIN MARRIOTT

FRESH PRODUCE
Hickory Wind
Flying Fish FF 018 (American Issue)

Everybody Loves My Baby; Crackling Down The Acorns; See You Tomorrow; Red Rocking Chair; Ragtime Annie; Moonshine Girl; Muvu Aahaa; Little Beggarman; Ship On The Rocks; Russian Roulette; Hop High Ladies; Turkey In The Straw.

Bob Shank, Sam Morgan, Pete Tenney, Mark Waldbridge and Glen McCarthy make up Hickory Wind and this, so far as I know, is their second album, the first being released on the Maryland-based *Adelphi* label.

Hickory Wind deserve much wider attention and I hope it isn't too long before Sonet get around to releasing this item in the UK. The album's content is, as the title implies, fresh produce; it's neither Bluegrass, Old-time, folk or country, but a pleasing musical montage of many styles, all of which fall into the strata of *country*. The group's instrumentation is amazingly varied and incorporates banjo, mandolin, acoustic guitar, string-bass, steel guitar, electric guitar, fiddle, flute, 12-string guitar, conga and hammered dulcimer. The material ranges from the scat-singing-based 'Everybody Loves My Baby', with its strong jazz overtones, and the gentle country ballad, 'Cracklin' Down', through to elegant traditional pieces played on the hammered dulcimer.

There's an awful lot of enjoyment to be derived from 'Fresh Produce' and I hope that British fans are given the opportunity of hearing the disc in the near future. I don't know if the import shops have copies yet but it's certainly worth checking out as quickly as possible.
Highly recommended.
Produced by Michael Melford.
BRYAN CHALKER

HIGH LONESOME
The Charlie Daniels Band
Epic 34377 (American Issue)

Billy The Kid; Carolina; High Lonesome; Running With The Crowd; Right Now Tennessee Blues; Roll Mississippi; Slow Song; Tennessee; Turned My Head Around.

Having recently returned from a tour of American Military Bases in Germany, I can tell you that club audiences are well into Soul and Country — in that order. Not too long ago the majority of US Bases featured mainly Rock and Soul music but Country has virtually extinguished the interest in the former and booking agents are clamouring for as much Country as they can get. It's interesting to note that the material requested stems from recordings by Johnny Cash, Mel Tillis, Lefty Frizzell, Johnny Horton (currently a hot favourite), Don Williams, Marshall Tucker, Charlie Pride, Merle Haggard, Asleep At The Wheel and Charlie Daniels. Daniels, it seems, is really the 'in' name at present and it can only be a matter of time before he makes a similar impact on British audiences.
It's hard to define Daniels' music; the basis of it possesses a heavy injection of Country but with hard Rock overtones and whilst you may have come to terms with the neo-Country of the Amazing Rhythm Aces, Poco and others of that ilk, Charlie Daniels may still be that bit too progressive. Nevertheless, he cuts a mean album and these two items are well worth investigating, especially by those bent on following current trends.
The music is hard and raw and just right for late-night discos and similar venues.
Produced by Don Rubin and Charlie Daniels.
BRYAN CHALKER

TEN SONGS ABOUT HER
Joe Stampley
Epic 34356 (*American Issue*)

There She Goes Again; Apt. No. 4 Sixth Street And Cincinnati; Backside Of Thirty; The Better Part Of Me; Take Me Back; She's Long Legged; You Lift Me Up; That Same Ol' Look Of Love; Funny How Time Slips Away; Country's Gonna Do It Again.

Stampley has never done a thing for me and I wasn't looking forward to the prospect of reviewing the album but, lo and behold, he's nearly converted me! His light voice glides across the songs easily and it's good, bouncy, modern country, with some pleasant asides from a whole host of hot pickers, including Pig Robbins, Billy Sanford, Curly Chalker, Tommy Allsup, Pete Drake and Johnny Gimble. With that kind of backing pedigree it ought to be good; and it is. I would imagine that this is about as country as Joe has ever been and I like the change from his usual material.
It won't do the import shops any harm to stock up on one or two copies, just in case I've persuaded readers to investigate.
Produced by Norro Wilson.
MARTIN MARRIOTT

RENEGADE PICKER
Steve Young
RCA PL 11759

Renegade Picker; I Can't Be Myself; Old Memories (Mean Nothing To Me); It's Not Supposed To Be That Way; Tobacco Road; Light Of My Life; Lonesome, On'ry And Mean; All Her Lovers Want To Be The Hero; Broken Hearted People (Take Me To A Barroom); Sweet Thing; Home Sweet Home (Revisited).

Just about everybody is predicting "77 as the year for Steve Young to make the breakthrough. Could be at that. Steve's certainly got a lot going for him at the moment — but I still prefer his *Sonet* LP, *Seven Bridges Road* (SNTF 705). *Renegade* is good and obviously whipping up quite a storm but the earlier disc possesses much more ethereal beauty, which I prefer.
But a whole lot of cats are going to dig songs like 'I Can't Be Myself', 'Home Sweet Home' and Buddy Starcher's old 'Sweet Thing'. Maybe John Marshall or Mike Staveley will make a little more of the album than I have. Still, don't take all that I say as the be-all-and-end-all — maybe you won't like *Seven Bridges Road*....

Produced by Roy Dea.
JERRY RHINEHARDT

THE BEST OF FARON YOUNG Volume 2
Mercury SRM 1-1130
(Special Import)

It's Four In The Morning; I'd Just Be Fool Enough; Goin' Steady; Another You; Leavin' And Sayin' Goodbye; (The Worst You Gave Me Was) The Best I Ever Had; Here I Am In Dallas; Some Kind Of A Woman; She Fights That Lovin' Feeling; Feel Again; This Little Girl Of Mine; Step Aside.

A collection of familiar tracks from near-perfect voice of Faron Young and one that will be boosted by the artist's recent tour of the UK. A supremely polished production from Jerry Kennedy and the usual tasteful performance from Mr. Young. Nice stuff but it doesn't tread any new ground.

GERRY WORTHINGTON

RUBBERDUCK
C. W. McCall
Polydor PD 1-6094
(American Issue)

'Round The World With Rubber Duck; Audobon; Super Slab Showdown; Windshield Wipers In The Rain; Sing Silent Night; Ratchetjaw; Nishnabotna; Two-Way Lovin'; Camp Bird Mine; Niobrara.

I must confess that the Rubber Duck is becoming more than a little tedious and I do think Bill Fries — alias C.W. McCall — has miled the CB theme for all it's worth. It's time to call a halt, my little chickadee; the Rubber Duck is in a rut. Can't say I ever switched on to McCall's voice in any big way, although 'Convoy' hit me for six when it first came out.
Okay, if you dig C.W. McCall.

Produced by Don Sears and Chip Davis.
MARTIN MARRIOTT

BIG WHA-KOO
ABC ABCL 5208

Whiskey Voices; Save Your Tears; Oh Philistine; Love's Been Known; Waiting On A Woman; Amnesty; Don't Knock; Big Wha-Koo.

Yes, that really is the name of the band, and when I tell you it's fronted by David Palmer (ex-lead guitarist with Steely Dan) and Nick van Maarth (ex-lead vocalist with The Crickets, circa *A Long Way From Lubbock*) you'll have some idea of what to expect. Okay, so it's not strictly country, but that acapella Poco-styled harmony on the lead-off track is good enough for me, and anybody else who tunes in on my wave-length. I think I can best describe their overall sound as lying between the aforementioned Poco and Atlanta Rhythm Section, and that can't be all bad!
Great songs, beautiful harmonies and a real sense of light and shade — miss out on this at your peril!

Produced by Roy Halee.
MIKE STAVELEY

SUSAN, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH, IT HURTS ME . . . LOVE, TONY
Tony Alamo with J. D. Sumner and The Stamps Quartet
Alamo TSA 777
(American Issue)

I Love You So Much It Hurts Me; Consideration; Jesus Is The Only Way; In The City Where The Lamb Is The Light; The Great Speckled Bird; How Long Has It Been; If God Is Dead; He Brought Me Out; Just Over In The Glory Land; Put Your Hand In The Hand; I'll Never Be Lonely Again; How Great Thou Art.

The title track, penned by Floyd Tillman, is obviously a very personal one as far as Alamo is concerned. Alamo's wife, Susan, left hospital not so long ago with just a few months left to live but incredible faith has kept her alive. Following treatment for a terminal illness doctors told Susan and Tony Alamo that there was no hope and that it would be only a matter of time before death invervened. Tony Alamo, together with J. D. Sumner and The Stamps Quartet, have put together this album of gospel songs as a measure of gratitude for Susan's survival. Gospel addicts will like the album.

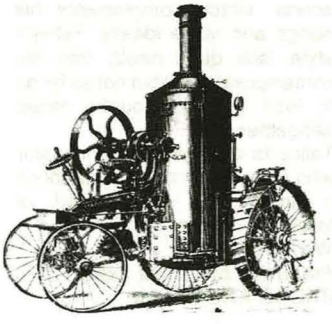
ALAN PETTIFER

PRETTY MUCH YOUR STANDARD RANCH STASH
Mike Nesmith
Island ILPS 9440

Continuing; Some Of Shelley's Blues; Release; Winonah; Born To Love You; FFV & Uncle Pen; Prairie Lullaby.

It was only when the Monkees released *Listen To The Band*, which was virtually a Nesmith showpiece, that we first recognised the direction and potential of this man, and his first album (highlighted by the sweet 'Joanne') since the split, complemented by his appearance at *The Nashville Room*, only served to confirm this assessment. Most of his albums since then have not enjoyed a secure outlet in this country but, now that *Island* have secured the rights to his material, the situation is at last being rectified.
The first album in this joint release ('Hits') is the weaker of the two, mainly because its entire instrumental support rests upon the shoulders of Nesmith himself (a simple strum becomes monotonous after a while) and Red Rhodes. Some nice songs, though, particularly 'Roll With The Flow' and the Ronstadt starter 'Different Drum'.
A full line-up on *Ranch Stash* makes up for this, and he also mixes his own songs in with others, giving the album a wider range of moods and styles. The man is no genius or innovator, but is indeed a genuine and sincere artist who deserves his place alongside those who claim to be, and those who really are.

Produced by Michael Nesmith.
MIKE STAVELEY



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DAVID ALLAN COE RIDES AGAIN
Columbia 34310 *(American Issue)*
Willie, Waylon And Me; The House We've Been Calling Home; Young Dallas Cowboy; A Sense Of Humour; The Punkin Centre Barn Dance; Willie, Waylon And Me (Reprise); Lately I've Been Thinking Too Much Lately; Laid Back And Wasted; Under Rachel's Wings; Greener Than The Grass We Laid On; If That Ain't Country.

The bitterly humorous 'If That Ain't Country' has already gotten Coe into trouble. True, the lyrics are a little risque — but they are funny and so beautifully constructed that few real country fans could take offence. I guess the line that's upset US DJ's is . . . "If that ain't country, I'll kiss your ass". Big deal — since when has that been offensive? Anyway, it's the standout cut and I imagine a lot of sharecropper farmers will readily identify with the cynical story-line.
Coe certainly has no singing voice but the enthusiasm is there, coupled with a great ability as a writer, and a perceptive one at that. The front cover photo is a gem and if you like souped-up motorcycles and leather riding gear, you might like to buy the LP just for the layout. Country trendies will love the whole thing.
Vintage DAO.

Produced by Ron Bledsoe and David Allan Coe.
GERRY WORTHINGTON

CHIP HAWKES' NASHVILLE ALBUM
RCA PL 25044

One More Dusty Road; Eleanor Rigby; Love Is A Guessing Game; Wilma Lou; Here Comes My Baby; Riders In The Sky; It's So Easy Telling Lies; All I Wanna Do In Life; The Face; .Walk Right Back.

For your information Chip Hawkes is a member of The Tremeloes (or maybe that should be past-tense) and for three years he'd hankered to record in Nashville; and now he's done it. So what, you may well ask! Certain aspects of the album work quite well, particularly Hawkes' own 'One More Dusty Road' and the old Stan Jones classic, 'Riders In The Sky', but for the most part it lacks direction and the one track, 'All I Wanna Do In Life', which could have been the saving grace, develops into a hash-up. Recorded at Jacks Tracks in Nashville and featuring the likes of Jim Isbell, Joe Allen, Jimmy Colvard, Reggie Young, Buddy Spicher and Charles Cochran, among others, it has a lot of potential behind it. Hawkes may like country music but he requires a greater knowledge of its finer points before venturing into the field.
An interesting experiment that missed the mark.

Produced by Roger Cook.
ALAN PETTIFER

JOHNNY DUNCAN
Columbia KC 34442
(American Issue)

Thinkin' Of A Rendezvous; Ain't You Something Else; Maybe I Just Crossed Your Mind; Atlanta Georgia Stray; Damn It All; It Couldn't Have Been Any Better; Love Should Be Easy; Charley Is My Name; Third Rate Romance; Denver Woman.

Duncan, not be be confused with Britain's American exile and creator of 'Last Train To San Fernando', can usually be relied upon to supply his fans with a collection of good songs. This latest LP proves to be no exception and, whilst he probably hasn't the appeal to garner a big following in the UK, there's certainly potential to make it worth while importing the odd copy. Good, strong, pop-country with bags of cross-over appeal, particularly for the US market.

Produced by Billy Sherrill
GERRY WORTHINGTON

MY KINDA COUNTRY
Steve Wilson Jnr.
Arny's Shack AS 010

Gypsy Woman; The Race Is On; Ghost Story; Kentucky Gambler; Come Early Morning; She's Mine; San Antone; Turn Out The Light; Lonesome Fugitive; Rodeo Man; Shelley's Winter Love; The Man Who Picked The Wild Wood Flower.

On first hearing I was very impressed with the overall sound obtained by the un-named backing musicians behind Steve. My copy lacks a sleeve and probably full details of those accompanying Steve will be featured on the finished product. Whoever they may be, I offer them my congratulations for originality and imagination. Unfortunately, Steve's vocal quality lets the side down badly and I couldn't decide whether the fault lay with the singer's actual voice or the standard of recording. The backing tracks on Side One of the album are splendid, although the quality on the flip-side of the recording is inconsistent. Stagewise Steve Wilson possesses a strong voice but I fear that it may not transfer too well to disc. However, a re-mix of the vocal track might well redeem what promised to be a very entertaining album. For British musicians, these boys have certainly got it together and I look forward to hearing them again.

Produced by Arny
BRYAN CHALKER

BLACKJACK CHOIR
James Talley
Capitol E-ST 11605

Bluesman; Alabama Summertime; Everybody Loves A Lovesong; Magnolia Boy; Mississippi River Whistle Town; Daddy Just Called It The Blues; Up From Georgia; Migrant Jesse Sawyer; You Know I've Got To Lover Her; When The Fiddler Packs His Case.

Thanks to various references in John Marshall's 'Contemporary Cowboy' column, the name of James Talley is becoming familiar to readers — and not before time. Talley's latest single, 'Alabama Summertime' is now in the *Billboard* country charts and seems destined for a long life. Reminiscent of the old Roger Miller sound, the song could well cross-over into the pop field and one hopes that EMI will at least give it a try in the UK.

Talley's albums are usually full of good things and I've come to respect him as a songwriter. The new album is possibly his best to date and certainly the most commercial. Using the combined efforts of B.B. King, Johnny Gimble, Tommy Smith, Doyle Grisham, Josh Graves and Steve Hostak, among others, Talley produces a really tight — and at times quite funky — backing sound, which complements his songs and voice ideally. Talley's style falls quite neatly into the contemporary bag but not so far as to lose sight of country music altogether.

Talley is an interesting innovator who has already made his mark on a small but select band of followers. His time will come. Worthwhile.

Produced by James Talley.
BRUCE ANDERSON

SOUTHERN NIGHTS
Glen Campbell
Capitol E-ST 11601

Southern Nights; This Is Sarah's Song; For Cryin' Out Loud; God Only Knows; Sunflower; Guide Me; Early Morning Song; (I'm Getting) Used To The Crying; Let Go; How High Did We Go.

Campbell moves further away from the country field with each new release these days but there's no denying the superior quality of his productions. Not exactly the kind of disc to attract country buffs but spot-on for the fans of GC.

Produced by Gary Klein.
MARTIN MARRIOTT

THESE SONGS ARE JUST FOR YOU
Gerry Ford
Emerald Gem GES 1164

She Came Here For The Change; You're My Best Friend; May The Bird Of Paradise (Fly Up Your Nose); I Love You Because; The Last Ride; Which One Will It Be; I Still Miss Someone; This Song Is Just For You; I Washed My Face In The Morning Dew; Ghost Story; You're Still Mine; Old Dogs And Children And Watermelon Wine.

Predictable but easy-on-the-ear country set from ex-Edinburgh policeman, Gerry Ford. Gerry's Light voice takes on twelve popular 'standards' and the fact that he's now with Ireland's *Emerald Gem* label should boost sales considerably. The backings are competent, if unimaginative, but there's a ready market for this undemanding material and Gerry should capture a healthy slice of it.

Produced by Chris Worrall.
BRYAN CHALKER

LASSO FROM EL PASO
Kinky Friedman
Epic EPC 81640

Sold American; Twinkle; Ahab The Arab; Dear Abbie; Kinky; Lady Yesterday; Catfish; Men's Room, L.A; Bananas And Cream; Ol' Ben Lucas; Ballad Of Ira Hayes; Waitret, Please, Waitret.

The title is based on a Chinga Chavin (see my March review of 'Country Porn') song that was originally meant to be included on the album, but outvoted in the final count. Undeterred by all of this, Kinky marches on with very few concessions to the cause of culture and concern, but there is one notable exception — a really sensitive and moving interpretation of Peter LaFarge's 'Ballad Of Ira Hayes'.

Rest of the time, it's the usual good-natured mood of bad-taste and irreverence put across with his usual verve and vitality — the Jewish cowboy rides on!

Produced by Kinky Friedman and Huey P. Meaux.
MIKE STAVELEY

THE LONGHORN JAMBOREE PRESENTS WILLIE NELSON & HIS FRIENDS
Plantation
PLP 24 *(American Issue)*

What A Way To Live; Misery Mansion; Rainy Day Blues; Night Life; Man With The Blues; The Storm Has Just Begun (Willie Nelson); Mississippi Woman; West Virginia Man (David Allan Coe); What I'd Say; Save The Last Dance For Me (Jerry Lee Lewis); Honey Don't; Blue Suede Shoes (Carl Perkins).

On the face of it this looks like a brand new Willie Nelson release — but it isn't and fans should make a careful study of the back sleeve before spending money. Willie is shown on the front cover with beard, long hair, stetson hat and studded denims but it's a latter-day image and not one relating to the tracks featured on this collection, which were recorded between 1959 and 1962. The album is obviously an attempt to cash in on Nelson's current popularity and no one can blame Shelby Singleton for trying. Admittedly, Singleton has listed the track dates on the sleeve but the impulsive buyer may be tempted to rush in and buy before realising what the album actually contains — and it's not *all* Willie Nelson.

Pushing the obvious pitfalls aside, it is an interesting release, made all the more so by the inclusion of the early David Allan Coe cuts.

DICK MASSEY

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HERE'S CHARLY McCLAIN
Epic KE34447

(American Issue)

It's Too Late To Love Me Now; Your Eyes; Lay Down; You Can Love It Away; Pride And Sorrow; Lay Something On My Bed Besides A Blanket; Leanin' On The Bottle; Lovin' Arms; Love Me 'Til The Morning Comes; Hasten Down The Wind.

It's often extremely difficult to be objective about all the many new names coming into country music, particularly when they happen to be females. So many of them sound the same that I quickly become dissatisfied and often only the strength of their material can salvage anything. I'm not sure how I view Charly — she's definitely female — but I think I'm going to like her. With a producer of Billy Sherrill's stature she can't be all bad. Nevertheless, I think he could have done a little more to pad out what basically amounts to a weak voice. Charly has a sweet little voice that does possess certain individual qualities that distinguishes her from countless others but only strong lyrics and melodies will be proof of her staying power. She hasn't got the vocal quality to make a song anything other than it already is and Charly will obviously have to lean heavily upon the experienced shoulders of Billy Sherrill, or others like him.
Sherrill has wisely opted for strong rhythm sections on most of the cuts and they bolster the singer's voice well enough. After a couple of plays I began to like what I heard but only a subsequent album will be proof of the pudding. If this comes to pass, perhaps Sherrill will consider putting a rougher edge to Charly's voice and giving it more 'body'; right now it's really only the tight arrangements that make me want to listen in depth.

ROBERT PAVLOW

BLUEGRASS MACHINE
The Acme Country Band
Westwood WRS 114

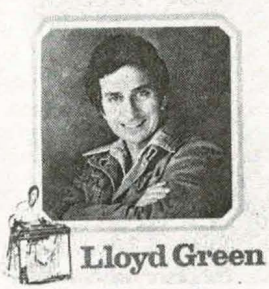
Ashes Of Love; Air Mail Special; Each Season Changes You; Snowbird; Arab Bounce; Little Annie; Hit Parade Of Love; This Morning At Nine; Fireball Mail; When I Stop Dreaming; Wild Side Of Life; Matthew; Rabbit In A Log; One Tear; Cold Icy Fingers; JB's Bee.

The Acme Country Band are fortunate in having the distinctive vocal style of Brian Curtis (late of the Down County Boys) at their helm. His voice is instantly recognisable and he proves that, as far as the British Isles are concerned, there are few to equal him when it comes to handling Bluegrass lyrics. Gordon Davies, in his sparse liner-notes, writes: 'There are sadly few true Bluegrass bands in Britain, so it comes as a real pleasure to fans of the real Bluegrass sound, to hear a new band that have a real traditional bite to their sound'. I couldn't agree more. The Acme Band really 'feel' the music and Jim Irving's wholly consistent banjo keeps the album moving along at an even pace. The vocals are extremely good and credit here must also go to Graham Sowter (guitar) and Ron Stevens (mandolin), as well as Brian Curtis. I enjoyed the whole album and hope to hear more from this exciting and authentic Bluegrass band. Nice stuff and performed with conviction and understanding.

MARTIN MARRIOTT

TEN SHADES OF GREEN
Lloyd Green
Checkmate CMLF 1001

Secret Love; Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms; Today, I Started Loving You Again; Amazing Grace; Darisa; Quicksand; Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain; San Antonio Stroll; Cold, Cold Heart; Rhinestone Cowboy.

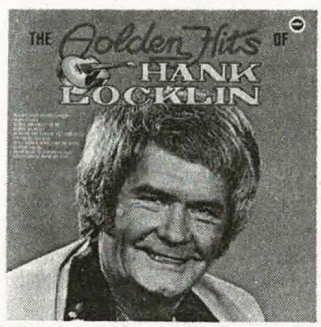


Back in '76 Lloyd Green found it hard to accept that he was a minor cult-figure in Britain, with a healthy following among country fans and steelies alike. I don't doubt that his recent Wembley appearance convinced him otherwise and he now sees himself as an instrumental 'star'. Few country instrumentalists have managed to achieve lasting fame outside of the United States but Green is one of them and any new album release by this master steel guitarist is awaited with interest.
Checkmate Records, whose vast catalogue will be familiar to our readers, have now, logically, gone into record production and this is the company's first. It's Good, down-to-earth steel playing with just enough commercialism to make it successful in pop and country music fields.
A pleasing first from *Checkmate*.

BRYAN CHALKER

GOLDEN HITS OF HANK LOCKLIN
Ember CW 147

Please Help Me I'm Falling; Geisha Girl; Happy Birthday To Me; Happy Journey; Send Me The Pillow You Dream On; These Arms You Push Away; Let Me Be The One; It's A Little More Like Heaven; Flying South; From Here To There To You; I Was Coming Home To You; We're Gonna Go Fishing.



Hank's biggest UK hit was 'Please Help Me I'm Falling" in 1960 but he also popularised a number of other songs, including, 'We're Gonna Go Fishing', 'From Here To There To You', 'Flying South' and 'This Song Is Just For You'. Locklin, born in McLellan, Florida, in 1918, has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in country music and, although his recording career has suffered a severe decline in recent years, he still maintains a vast fan following throughout the world, particularly in the United Kingdom. These re-recordings of Hank's past hits should prove to be a steady seller for *Ember Records* and it will serve to remind people of his considerable contributions to the world of pop-country.

Produced by Shelby Singleton, Jnr.

ALAN PETTIFER

COUNTRY MEETS ROCK 'N' ROLL
Various Artists
ABC 28 082 ET

(German Issue)

Circle Rock (Lloyd Copas); Pretty Bad Blues (Ronnie Self); Just One More Lie (Sonny James); Bye Bye Love (T. Tommy); Mister Fire Eyes (Bonnie Guitar); That's The Way It's Gotta Be (Jimmy Work); Leather Jacket (Leroy Van Dyke); Swanee River Rock (Sanford Clark); Say Pardner (The Cowboys and Indians); Mean, Mean, Mean Son Of A Gun (Johnny Horton); South Rampart Street Parade (Leon McAuliffe); Carry On (Jimmy Newman); Everybody's Body (George Hamilton IV); Call Me Shorty (Mickey Gilley); Step It Up And Go (Mac Wiseman); Honky Tonk Rock (Jim Lowe).

Contractual difficulties prevent this album from being readily available to fans outside of West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland but interested readers may obtain it from *Bear Family Records*, Goethestrasse 9, 2800 Bremen, West Germany.
The sleeve contains the legend: "16 Super Rare Tracks From The Fifties", which will no doubt add greatly to the album's general appeal but, if you really are a '50's R'n' R buff, I'd check it out carefully before sending off your cash. I won't dispute that the contributions from Lloyd Copas, Ronnie Self, Jimmy Newman, Johnny Horton, Jim Lowe, George Hamilton IV, Mickey Gilley and Mac Wiseman fall neatly into the Rock 'N' Roll" genre but I'm not sure about the remainder. 'Say Pardner', by the Cowboys and Indians, is the most dubious track and it really is a sub-standard bummer all the way down the line. Basically it's a pathetic skit on the traditional 'Arkansas Traveller' but the opening bars are almost a direct lift from Frankie Miller's classic 'Blackland Farmer'. This is one cut that compiler Lonnie Sutherland should have forgotten about.
Rock purists will find much to contest here but, nevertheless, it's a very interesting album and one that cuts nicely into the country bag as well, particularly in view of the tracks by Bonnie Guitar, Sonny James, T. Tommy Cutre and Leroy Van Dyke.

Recommended

BRYAN CHALKER

FOUR
Billy Swan
Columbia 34473

(American Issue)

Swept Away; Playing The Game Of Love; Pardon Me; Oliver Swan; Smoky Places; Don't Kill Our Love; Not Everyone Knows; Last Call; California Song; Me And My Honey.

For mild rockers and fans of Billy Swan. 'Nuff said!

Produced by Billy Swan.

DICK MASSEY

YOU'RE FREE TO GO
Sonny James
Columbia 34472 (*American Issue*)
You're Free To Go; I Ain't Blamin' You; Down To My Last Goodbye; I'm A 'Goin' Toward The Rising Sun; The Sweet Healing Rain Of Home; Puttin' On The Dog Tonight; I Can't Get You Out Of My Mind; I Love You Most Of All; The Day's Not Over Yet; Beautiful Isle.

Were it not for the addition of the superlative acoustic guitar tracks, this would simply be another pop-country production. But the clear Martin guitar, presumably picked by James himself, lifts it out of the rut and I found myself playing it again and again. Subtle use of strings also gives the album more than a touch of class and I don't think Sonny's voice has ever sounded better. Just listen to the way he handles 'Down To My Last Goodbye'; a single release if ever I heard one! The acoustic guitar on this track is a masterpiece. . . .

There's plenty of variety and Sonny hasn't stuck to the same theme throughout; I also enjoyed the almost tongue-in-cheek 'Puttin' On The Dog' and the John Leyton-sounding 'I'm A Goin' Toward The Rising Sun', with its distinct shades of 'Johnny, Remember Me'.

Possibly one of the artist's best-ever albums and one that demands your attention.

Produced by George Richey.

ALAN PETTIFER

HOW LATE'LL YA PLAY 'TIL
Dave Bromberg Band
Fantasy FTSP 53
Danger Man; Get Up And Go; Summer Wages; Dallas & Maple Leaf Rag; Whoopee Ti Yi Yo; Young Westley; Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues; Bluebird; Idol With The Golden Head; Chubby Thighs; Kaatskill Serenade; Sloppy Drunk; Bullfrog Blues; Sweet Home Chicago; Come On In My Kitchen; I'll Not Be Your Fool; Such A Night.

David Bromberg must be to the guitar what Charlie McCoy is to the harmonica — there can be few artists around of any real repute who have failed to use him on at least one album, and here he shows that his talents extend well into the regions of solo performer. In fact, I have seen few artists able to display the same rapport with an audience as Bromberg, a talent ably demonstrated on the second record of this double set — his technique of delaying the punch line, and holding the audience in complete suspense (expecially on the 16-minute 'Bullfrog Blues') is absolutely superb.

An excellent mixture of country songs and blues, brought to life beautifully by the band and guests Bernie Leadon, Dr. John and Phoebe Snow. Will probably appeal more to the rock side of the country audience and they will, I'm sure, agree that this really is a high-class performance.

Produced by Steve Burgh and David Bromberg.

MIKE STAVELEY

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT YOU DO
John Hartford
Sonet SNTF 727
You Don't Have To Do That; Didn't Want To Be Forgotten; In Tall Buildings; John McLaughlin; Granny Wontcha Smoke Some Marijuana; False Hearted Tenor Waltz; Joseph's Dream; Down; The Golden Globe Award; Sly Feel; Somewhere My Love – We'll Meet Again Sweetheart; Nobody Knows What You Do.

The brilliant, deep, grossly underrated Hartford strikes again with another set of witty, musically inventive tracks, many of which I fear will pass right over the heads of the average country fans. There are times when Hartford becomes surely confirms his stature to be on a par with contemporary dobro stars like Tut Taylor and Norman Blake. Once again he has the backing of the studio talents of Dave Bromberg and the great Vassar Clements and Lloyd Green is on hand too to add steel and dobro on a couple of tracks.

The standout cuts are 'Georgia On My Mind', where Bromberg and Auldridge duet and solo on the Hoagy Carmichael standard, 'Lloyd's Of Nashville', with Lloyd Green adding the sweetest of second dobros and 'Blues For Barbara', on which Vassar Clements plays Grapelli-style runs, Bromberg adds acoustic slide and Danny Flowers (a Don Williams' band member), an understated harmonica to Auldridge's lead. The treatments of the mid-Sixties pop hits, the Monkees 'Last Train To Clarksville' and the Mamas & Papas 'California Dreamin', are fresh, free of cliche and beautifully produced. There are only two vocal tracks — 'Dreaming My Dreams', on which Mike is joined by Emmylou Harris, and 'Carolina Sunshine', where he is aided by Garth Fundis. Although the tracks are musically excellent, they only serve to emphasise the Auldridge's great strength lies in his dobro technique and not his vocal ability.

This is a *great* album and I do not hesitate to recommend it to guitar freaks who look to country and country sessionmen for inspiration.

KEITH ROWLEY

RIDIN' HIGH
Rex Allen Jnr.
Warner Brothers BS 2958
(American Issue)
Teardrops In My Heart; Since I Lost Her To You; I Love Everything I Get My Hands On; I Gotta Remember To Forget You; While The Feeling's Good; Can You Hear Those Pioneers; Home-Made Love; Streets Of Laredo; Play Me No Sad Songs; You're The Only One I'll Ever Love; San Antonio Rose; Crying In The Rain.

Here's yet another LP that's been hanging on waiting to be reviewed for many months. The cover is slightly dull and doesn't really tempt one to look into the product lurking within. But, if you stumble across it in the import racks, take a listen, I think you'll enjoy it.

Rex's dad was the last of the singing cowboys and today he's better known for his work with the Walt Disney movie company as a narrator. Father and son both possess excellent, masculine voices and on this album Rex Jnr. pays tribute to the golden era of the West with the traditional 'Streets Of Laredo', treated here most sympathetically, and the superb 'Can You Hear Those Pioneers', a major country hit for him last year. The latter, penned by Rex Jnr, is a marvellous song, full of nostalgic glimpses of the Sons of The Pioneers, Rex Allen, Roy and Dale Rogers, Tex Ritter and Gene Autry.

In no way is this a 'cowboy' album because, sensibly, Allen has sandwiched any ballads containing references to the genre between funky, up-to-date country sounds. The old Bob Wills classic, 'San Antonio Rose' comes in for a bright interpretation, with some punchy background vocals from Steve, Ladonna and Rudi Gatlin.

Excellent stuff and highly recommended.

Produced by Norro Wilson and Larry Butler

MARTIN MARRIOTT

TEXAS DANCE PARTY
Johnny Gimble
Columbia X598 *(American Issue)*
Lone Star Rag; I'll Keep On Loving You; La Zinda Waltz; Texas Fiddle Man; Texas Skip; Under The 'X' In Texas; Blues For Joe Tee; Bosque Bandit; Slow 'N' Easy; End Of The Line.

Highly enjoyable 'live' offering from fiddle ace Johnny Gimble, whose recent appearance at Wembley will long be remembered by lovers of good country music. Recorded at a 'typical large Texas dance hall' before an invited audience of 700, the set comes over very well and Gimbles friendly between-track chatter helps the continuity perfectly. Featuring Curly Hollingsworth (piano); John Gimble (fiddle, electric mandolin, banjo and vocals); Bill Mounce (drums); Kenny Frazier (guitar); Maurice Anderson (steel guitar); and Dick Gimble (bass), the whole thing manages to conjure up much of the Texas dance hall atmosphere which, of course, it was intended to do.

Perhaps the major record companies are slow to achnowledge the re-emergence of authentic dance music from the Texas/Oklahoma area but, according to Red Steagall and Hank Thompson, both of whom I spoke to recently, it represents big business and has done so for countless years. And this album shows you the kind of music you'd expect to hear at a typical Saturday night dance.

Great stuff.

Produced by Johnny Gimble.

BRYAN CHALKER

LIVE AT McCLURE, VIRGINIA

Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys. Featuring Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin, The Country Gentlemen, Leslie Keith, Reno & Harrell, Larry Sparks, The Goins Brothers, Outdoor Plumbing Co., Raymond Fairchild, The Sullivan Family and The Marshall Family.

Rebel SLP 1554/55 (*American Issue*)

I Hear A Choo Choo; I'm On My Way Back To The Old Home; Stone Walls And Steel Bars; Cotton-Eyed Joe; Eatin' Out Of Your Hand; Record Commercial; Mama Don't Allow; Blue Ridge Mountain Home; Green Pastures In The Sky; East Virginia Blues; John Dig A Hole; Pike County Breakdown; Nine Pound Hammer; Nobody's Love Is Like Mine; White Dove; I Just Think I'll Go Away; Satisfied; When The Saints Go Marching In; Whoa Mule; Matterhorn; The Legend Of The Rebel Soldier; Something That The World Didn't Give Me; Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour; Little Black Train; Can't You Hear Me Calling.

Along with Bill Monroe, of course, Ralph and Carter Stanley were among the pioneers and finest exponents of Bluegrass. Although Carter Stanley is dead, Ralph continues to tour and record with The Clinch Mountain Boys and this *live* double album is an excellent example of the type of authentic roots music that is the spontaneous strength of American Bluegrass festivals.

Recorded at last year's McClure Festival, this album is living proof of the power of the Bluegrass Revival underway in the States. Even lesser-known acts here, like the Outdoor Plumbing Company for example, are technically faultless and instrumentally dazzling, but the highlights of the album all belong to Ralph and the Clinch Mountain Boys joined by Monroe, Jimmy Martin and Leslie Keith, the Stanleys' first fiddle player from back in '46.

'I Hear A Choo Choo', 'I'm On My Way Back To The Old Home' (featuring Bill Monroe) and 'Stone Walls And Steel Bars', from *Side One*; 'Nobody's Love Is Like Mine', 'White Dove' and 'I Just Think I'll Go Away' (featuring Jimmy Martin's superb flat-picking guitar style), from *Side Three*; and 'Can't You Hear Me Calling' (a jam with Monroe), on *Side Four*, are seven of the best examples of Bluegrass that you are ever likely to hear on a modern album.

When you hear music as good as this you can't help but feel sorry for those who believe that country music begins and ends in Nashville. Long live Ralph Stanley and *Rebel Records.*

KEITH ROWLEY

PAPER ROSIE
Gene Watson
Capitol E-ST 11597

Paper Rose; You Gave Me A Mountain; If The Shoe Fits Wear It; Tennessee Sunshine; Desperation; Til You Can Make It On Your Own; Most Of All Why; Just At Dawn; Don't Look At Me; I'd Settle For Just Crossing Her Mind.

Gene is a relative newcomer to the American country music scene but he's been notching up a fair share of modest hits since his arrival. '*Paper Rosie*' is Gene's first UK album release and, with prompt promotion from the *Capitol* press office, things could take off for him. It's a good album in the style of '60's country and those who can recall his previous 'Love In The Hot Afternoon', 'Where Love Begins' and 'You Could Know As Much About A Stranger' hits, will know what to expect. Watson may never become a superstar but I can predict a profitable future for him if he sticks to the format contained herein.

Produced by Russ Reeder.
ALAN PETTIFER

FINE LACE AND HOMESPUN CLOTH
George Hamilton IV
Anchor ANCL 2022

Everlasting (Everlasting Love); In The Palm Of Your Hand; No Time Left For Lovin'; May The Winds Always Be At Your Back; I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now; Cornbread, Beans & Sweet Potato Pie; I Had A Horse; The Wonderful Soupstone; 'Till The Fiddle Comes Off That Wall; John's.

With Allen Reynolds at the helm and a group of sessionmen that includes Joe Allen, Jim Isbell, Jim Colvard, Lloyd Green, Danny Flowers and Charles Cochran, it just had to be a facsimile of the Don Williams sound — and that's precisely what it is, with one or two innovations.

George's voice lends itself well to Reynolds' soft-rock treatment and I think the general transition from the singer's old *RCA* folk-country sound to this mid-Seventies area of commercial Country is extremely successful. The proof of this particular pudding will lie in the acceptance of the album by Hamilton's fans, of course. Vocally, George hasn't changed one iota, it's merely the approach to the material that's different. The songs are well chosen and represented are such diverse writing talents as Danny Flowers (Don Williams' superlative guitarist), Larry Kingston, Harlan Howard, Alex Harvey, Joe Allen and Shel Silverstein.

It would be difficult to select a single from the ten tracks but personally I favour 'May The Winds Be Always At Your Back', John's' and 'I Had A Horse'.

I wish you luck with your new sound George — you timed it well!
BRYAN CHALKER

INHERITANCE
Keith Manifold
DJM 22061

I Recall A Gypsy Woman; She Can't Be; Help Me Make It Through The Night; Be Careful Of Stones That You Throw; Gonna Find Me A Bluebird; The Inheritance; Cascading Dreams; I Can't Stop Loving You; Is Anybody Goin' To San Antone; Yodelling Granny.

A pleasant and undemanding album from one of Britain's busiest solo performers. Phil Sampson's production is relaxed and totally geared to a middle-of-the-road market, which is just about the best way of promoting country music. I could have done without the uptempo unsympathetic reading of the Allen Reynolds classic, 'I Recall A Gypsy Woman' but the remainder of the album should ensure that Keith is hauled back for a follow-up before many months have passed. It's good to see a British artist making it on a major label and with *DJM's* current policy as far as country product is concerned, I'd say he was on to a very good thing.
ALAN PETTIFER

ALIVE AND WELL!
Bob Luman
Epic 34445
(American Issue)

I Still Miss Someone; Big River; Here We Are Making Love Again; Got To Have Room; Blond Haired Woman; Labor Of Love; Get Rhythm; He's Got A Way With Women; Sweet Dreams; Hey Porter.

BOB LUMAN ROCKS
Bob Luman
DJM 22057

Let's Think About Living; My Baby Walks All Over Me; Class Of '59; Buttercup; Dreamy Doll; You Win Again; The Great Snowman; Meet Mr. Mud; Hey Joe; Louisiana Man; The Fool; Private Eye; Why Baby Why; You Got Everything.

Luman's recording career goes back to 1955 but his hits have been fairly sporadic and UK fans will best remember him for 'Let's Think About Living', a cross-over hit in '60. The song was recently re-released and almost became a chart-contender all over again. Bob's style has always bordered on Rock and Rockabilly and it's interesting to note the comparisons between these two albums, *Alive And Well*, recorded between 1976 and 1977 and *Rocks*, which contains much older material. On the new album Luman proves that he can still turn out a good Rocker but the Country roots are more than apparent. Rockers will find a wealth of good cuts on the *DJM* compilation and Bill Millar's excellent liner-notes add value to the package. If, however, you like to split the difference between Rock and Country sounds, the new US release will be far more appealing. Produced by Johnny Cash and recorded at the House Of Cash studios, the album bridges the gap between the two styles perfectly. The whole production is chock full of potential hits, including 'Big River', 'Here We Are Making Love Again', 'Labor Of Love' and 'Hey Porter'.
BRYAN CHALKER

BEST OF LEO KOTTKE 1971-76
Capitol CAPS 1003

Morning Is The Long Way Home; June Bug; When Shrimps Learn to Whistle; Room 8; Cripple Creek; Pamela Brown; Standing On The Outside; Grim To The Brim; Power Failure; You Tell Me Why; Why Ask Why; Open Country Joy; All Through The Night; Scarlatti Rip-Off.

I find it very hard to be objective about this kind of album — there's obviously no doubting his ability as a guitarist, the question is whether this ability stands as good entertainment for other than fellow enthusiasts of the fretboard. Actually, I find it rarely works out that way for me, but I suppose it all depends on your aim?

Mind you, he does throw in a few 'vocal' (I use the term reservedly) tracks to try and balance things out. Of these, Procol Harum's 'Power Failure' probably works the best, and the Beau Brummels' 'You Tell Me Why' (a lovely, lilting song in the hands of Sal Valentino) the worst. Nevertheless, despite the album's restricted appeal, I'm sure there must be enough afficionados around determined to prove me wrong!

Produced by Danny Bruce.
MIKE STAVELEY

RAIN ON
Gene Cotton
ABC ABCL 5213

You Got Me Running; Me And The Elephant; Song For You; Deeper And Deeper; Clarissa; Rain On; Sweet Destiny; Young Lover Comes Alive; The Gift Of Song.

After one or two promising singles, which bit the dust in the UK, I'd expected great things from Gene Cotton but this album suggests that he's still unsure of a real musical direction. I enjoyed 'Me And The Elephant' but the rest of the tracks left me wondering how to pigeon-hole the album; perhaps I shouldn't even try. Good of its kind but I can't see Cotton meaning much to country fans at present.

Produced by Stephen A. Gibson.
DICK MASSEY

I'M SORRY FOR YOU MY FRIEND
Moe Bandy
Columbia KC34443

I'm Sorry For You, My Friend; Someone That I Can Forget; The Lady From The Country (of Eleven Hundred Springs); So Much For You, So Much For You, So Much For Me; All The Beer And All My Friends Are Gone; A Four Letter Fool; High Inflation Blues; Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind; She's An Angel; She's Everybody's Woman; I'm Nobody's Man.

Yet another smasheroo from the newly-crowned King of Honky-Tonk music and one that should leap right up to the top of the import charts. Bandy has carved out his own special niche, taking over from the position once occupied by the likes of Charlie Walker. Moe's voice isn't anything special but his choice of material is perfect and what he sings, he so obviously believes. Moe Bandy has masses of country soul in his heart and it comes across in his performances. British buffs have begun to latch on to Moe in a big way and it could pave the path for a future Wembley appearance, together with what amounts to a cult following.

Produced by Ray Baker
MARTIN MARRIOTT

GREAT MOMENTS AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY
Various Artists (2-LP set)
RCA CPL2-1904
(American Issue)

Dialogue (Minnie Pearl); Once A Day (Connie Smith); Apache (Sonny James); Galloping On The Guitar (Chet Atkins); Daddy What If (Bobby Bare); I'm Movin' On (Hank Snow); Where No One Stands Alone (Don Gibson); Coat Of Many Colours (Dolly Parton); Highway Headin' South (Porter Wagoner); He'll Have To Go (Jim Reeves); Dialogue with Johnny Russell – Make Friends (Archie Campbell); Just In Case (Ronnie Milsap); Word Games (Billy Walker); Country Sunshine (Dottie West); It's That Time Of Night (Jim Ed Brown).

Whilst not an immediate prospect for immediate sales due to the lack of songs included, the album is really a semi-documentary with the various stars relating stories about their experiences, and will be of great interest to fans with more than a fleeting interest in country music. Produced by Ralph Emery, *Great Moments At The Grand Ole Opry*, is probably only good for one spin if you want straight entertainment but as historic archive material, it's invaluable. Local radio stations wishing to avoid needle-time restrictions, could benefit from an album of this nature. A souvenir programme of the Grand Ole Opry is included in the package.
BRYAN CHALKER

HILLBILLY JAZZ VOLUME 1
Sonet SNTF 721

San Antonio Rose; Texas Blues; Take Me Back To Tulsa; Delta Blues; Fais Do Do; Breakfast Feud; Browns Ferry Blues; It's Dark Outside; Panhandle Rag; Blues For Dixie; Cherokee; Sentimental Journey.

HILLBILLY JAZZ VOLUME 2
Sonet SNTF 722

Back Home In Indiana; Sitting On Top Of The World; Crazy 'Cause I Love You; Hang Your Head In Shame; Vassar's Boogie; Little Rock Getaway; Yellow Sun; C Jam Blues; Gravy Waltz; Tippin In; You All Come; Last Song For Shelby Jean.

These two albums, released by *Sonet* as part of their *Flying Fish* catalogue deal, are a well presented double set. The cover design and comprehensive sleeve notes tie the two albums together. The combo of Dave Bromberg on guitar, Vassar Clements on fiddle and viola, Doug Jernigan on steel and dobro, Michael Melford on guitar, mandolin and piano, Ellis Padgett on bass, Sam Pruett on guitar, D.J. Fontana on drums, Ken Smith on electric bass, with Gordon Terry, assisted by Vassar Clements providing any vocal accompaniment required, have put together almost every combination of jazz-influenced country. Inevitably they start with Bob Wills' Western Swing numbers, but they then pleased me with some Country-Blues jazz and even Cajun jazz (?). (I always thought Cajun was almost there anyway.) Western Swing is faithfully reproduced, but thereafter the purists have permission to wince, cringe and bleat. However, Tony Russell, well known for his views on Old Time Music, has this to say on the sleeve: "HILLBILLY JAZZ may sound to the uninitiated like a contradiction in terms . . . It is basically country music played by men with country music backgrounds but acutely jazzy sensibilities . . . HILLBILLY JAZZ is a 1970's exercise in . . . Western Swing. . . ."
Nuff said, I liked this set and its covers. Yes, for many of the tracks I had the impression of chuffing along behind some mystic cow-catcher. 'Texas Blues' I particularly liked (not sure that it was real country, mind). It gave me the feeling of starting a journey through the country, building up steam and all, with slide guitar and scraping fiddle. I enjoyed the trip, but I suggest hearing a couple of tracks before purchase.

Produced by Michael Melford for Jannie Kathleen White
FAT JOHN SHOTTON

RONNIE MILSAP LIVE
RCA PL 12043

Introduction – Ralph Emery; Pure Love; Medley: I Hate You /That Girl who Waits At Tables; Welcome – Talk By Ronnie Milsap; Medley: (I'm A) Stand By Your Woman Man /What Goes On When The Sun Goes Down /Daydreams About Night Things; Busy Makin' Plans; Kaw-Liga; Country Cookin' I Can Almost See Houston From Here; (After Sweet Memories) Play Born To Lose Again; Music Style Medley: Daydreams About Night Things /Cattle Call; Let My Love Be Your Pillow; (I'd Be) A Legend In My Time; Honky Tonk Women.

Excellent *live* set from Milsap recorded at the Grand Ol Opry House and bubbling over with good vibes and atmosphere. 'Kaw-Liga' is particularly good and I liked the casual asides between Milsap and the backing musicians. There's little more I need say — if you like modern country and Ronnie Milsap, you'll appreciate this album.

Produced by Tom Collins and Ronnie Milsap
DICK MASSEY

WELCOME TO MY WORLD
Cliff Whelan
Sweet Folk and Country SFA 061

Welcome To My World; Yo Ho Valley; Legend In My Time; You're The Only Good Thing That Happened To Me; Rose Marie; He'll Have To Go; Cup Of Joy; Virginia; When You Are Gone; Kathleen; Be Nobody's Darling But Mine; Worthless Without You.

What a pity Cliff, such a marvellous *live* performer from all accounts, has been saddled with such a dreary, plodding backing. With a voice as good as his it's a tragedy that a major label hasn't had the initiative to snap him up for at least a trial album and single. Alan Green, of Mid-Wales Sound Studios, has done his best but little or no imagination has been used by the backing musicians and it does seem a shame to throw away such a good voice. Nevertheless, as a gigging album (translation: to be sold at the artist's bookings) it will score well and I think Joe Stead will see his investment returned in full. Perhaps next time Cliff will insist that better arrangements are used.

Produced by Alan Green
BRYAN CHALKER

WE'VE GOT A LIVE ONE HERE
Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen
(2-LP set) Warner Brothers K66043

One Of Those Nights; Semi Truck; Smoke! Smoke! Smoke!; Big Mammau; San Antonio Rose; 18 Wheels; Mama Hated Diesels; Lookin' At The World Through A Windshield; My Window Faces The South; Milkcow Blues; It Should've Been Me; Back To Tennessee; Seeds And Stems; Rock That Boogie; Riot In Cell Block No. 9; Don't Let Go; Too Much Fun; Hot Rod Lincoln; Lost In The Ozone.

Whatever else this controversial outfit may have done during their relatively brief recording career, they certainly gave trucking songs an air of respectability and I'm pleased to see so many included here. I've never enjoyed 'live' albums too much but Cody's special brand of exhuberence gets through to me. There have been reports that this isn't up to the standard of their previous releases — but it is a 'live' recording and for one who usually finds such product boring, I really did get a kick out of most of the tracks. The original Lost Planet Airmen may have fizzled out in the ozone at last — but they certainly won't be forgotten; they were too good for that.
An album full of guts and spunk and lots of good mainstream country music. A fitting tribute to a great band.

Produced by Tom Anderson
ROBERT PAVLOW

BAYOU BLUES
Clifton Chenier
Specialty SNTF 5012

Boppin' The Rock; The Things I Did For You; Yesterday; Clifton's Squeeze-box Boogie; I'm On My Way – Part 1; Eh, Petite Fille; All Night Long; Opelousas Hop; I'm On My Way – Part 2; Think It Over; Zodico Stomp; The Cat's Dreamin'.

The 'King of the Bayou' accordionists strikes up his usual generous helping of raunchy Cajun-cum-Zodico sounds and broad-minded Cajun freaks will dig every minute of it. 'Nuff said.

JERRY RHINEHARDT

RAY SAWYER
Capitol E-ST 11591

Red-Winged Blackbird; Drinking Wine Alone; Love Ain't The Question; The One I'm Holding Now; Daddy's Little Girl; Crazy Rosie; Maybe I Could Use That In A Song; I Need The High; Walls And Doors; Last Of A Dying Breed.

Although initially recognised as the lead singer with Dr. Hook, of late Ray Sawyer's role has been substantially taken over by the maniacal Dennis Locorriere, so maybe that's why he felt it necessary to cut a solo album. Unfortunately, as so often happens in such circumstances, he fails to establish himself as a really distinctive individual, for which the material must bear a certain amount of the blame. Of the ten songs featured, only 'Crazy Rosie' and 'Last Of A Dying Breed' manage to emerge from the gloom of a dreary programme with a certain gleam of credit.

Produced by Ron Haffkine.
MIKE STAVELEY

I DON'T WANNA TALK IT OVER ANYMORE
Connie Smith
Columbia KC 34270

(American Issue)

So Sad (To Watch Good Love Go Bad); Love Don't Care (Where It Grows); Come On Down; Storms Never Last; Constantly; I Don't Wanna Talk It Over Anymore; The Latest Shade Of Blue; I'm All Wrapped Up In You; You Crossed My Mind A Thousand Times Today; I Wonder If The Angels Could Use Another Singer.

Call me a male chauvinist pig if you like but I tend to place less credence on female country artists than I do their male counterparts. I make no apologies for it and I suppose, at times, I tend to miss out when the editor hands me a bunch of albums to review and I cunningly slip all those featuring female voices back to him. Women, of course, tend to possess far less distinctive voices than men but at least I can pick out Connie Smith from the rest. I like her strong voice and powerful delivery and whatever she cares to sing is good enough for me. In fact, I'm building up a fair collection of her albums these days. Maybe it's because I had lunch with the lady once that I like her so much; she's a charming creature and as sincere as she sounds on disc. Now that country is beginning to rool (OK) in Britain (late of Great), it's quite alright for me to mosey into my local discotessan and filter through the racks to find the Connie Smith platters. All this says nothing whatever about the album under review but for me the lady can do no wrong — and it's a good album anyway, so y'all rush out an' buy it, y'hear!

Produced by Ray Baker
JERRY RHINEHARDT

PEANUTS AND DIAMONDS AND OTHER JEWELS
Bill Anderson
MCA MCF 2790

Peanuts And Diamonds; Meanwhile Back In Cleveland; Let Me Whisper Darling One More Time; Your Love Blows Me Away; Why'd The Last Time Have To Be The Best; Liars One, Believers Zero; We've Got It All; Sweet Texas; Daddy You Know What; Thanks.

Interpreted by other artists, Anderson's songs don't sound quite so cloying but when he sings his own semi-recitations, it's just more than I can stand. Fortunately, Bill has selected material by other writers for this album and, mingled with his contributions, the collection gets by quite well. There aren't that many strong tracks, however, and Stirling Whipple's 'Your Love Blows Me Away' and Bill's 'Sweet Texas' are the only tracks with any kind of UK potential behind them, in spite of the inclusion of Bill's recent hit, 'Liars One, Believers Zero'.
Still, it doesn't really matter what I care to write about Bill's music or his own peculiar style of 'singing', the artist has a substantial following in Britain and his recent tour will have stimulated interest in the album.

Produced by Buddy Killen and Own Bradley
ROBERT PAVLOW

SOMEBODY LOVES YOU
Ann & Ray Brett
Sweet Folk & Country SFA 070
Somebody Loves You; Gotta Travel On; Mama's Waiting; I Wonder If I Care As Much; What More Can I Do; Gyspy Woman; Blanket On The Ground; I Want To Live; Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain; I've Cried Before; When I Stop Dreaming; How Great Thou Art.

Exactly why this highly talented husband-and-wife duo have been neglected by record companies in the past is totally beyond me. This is only their second album, the first being privately recorded and not generally available.

Following one or two below-par releases, Joe Stead's label seems to have picked up its traces again and I thoroughly enjoyed Ann and Ray's efforts. There's little here that's original but the vocals are crystal clear and Ray's guitar playing is worthy of commendation.

Alan Green, of Mid-Wales Sound Studios, has pulled off a nice production and it's one of the 'cleanest' British albums I've listened to in a long while. I can predict very healthy sales indeed for 'Somebody Loves You'.

Recommended.

BRYAN CHALKER

HERE'S JODY MILLER
Epic 34446
Roll Me On The Water; Try Me Again; You Can Be Replaced; Won't You Stay (Just A Little Bit Longer); Maybe I Should've Been Listenin'; Montana Cowboy; Spread A Little Love Around; When The New Wears Off Our Love; This Is Us; I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby.

Jody's Wembley performance might have been less than memorable but it would be unfair to dismiss on that basis alone. Her new album, for instance, is outstanding and I urge you to give it your undivided attention. Jerry Crutchfield's production technique is mainstream country for the most part but he's obviously not averse to nostalgic whimsies from time to time, as the superior 'I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby' indicates; it happens to be my favourite track. It's unfortunate that British audiences only seem to remember Jody for the trite 'Queen Of The House'; there really is a lot more to the girl and I'm sure the album will earn a lot of money for her.

BRUCE ANDERSON

CHET ATKINS PICKS ON THE BEATLES
RCA NL12002
I Feel Fine; Yesterday; If I Fell; Can't Buy Me Love; I'll Cry Instead; Things We Said Today; A Hard Day's Night; I'll Follow The Sun; She's A Woman; And I Love Her; Michelle; She Loves You.

When it was first issued I suppose this collection would have sounded quite OK but now, several years hence, it sounds very dated. Nevertheless, in view of the current Beatles revival, there's bound to be a market for the album somewhere but it's far from being Atkins' most creative work.

ALAN PETTIFER

SOUNDS FROM MARLBORO COUNTRY
Marlboro
(Special Issue)
The Magnificent Seven; The Commancheros; The Ballad Of The Alamo; How The West Was Won; The Good The Bad And The Ugly; High Noon; The Green Leaves Of Summer; Ghost Riders In The Sky; Theme From Hondo; The Return Of The Seven; Hang 'Em High; A Professional Gun; The Man From Laramie; Wandering Star; Once Upon A Time In The West; Johnny Guitar; High Plains Drifter; Rain Drops Keep Falling; True Grit; Rio Bravo.

Orchestrated versions of famous movie soundtracks should find favour among cowboy buffs but the album is in no way connected with country music. You have been warned. Chances are you won't find it around, anyway, as it appears to have been produced specially for the Wembley Festival.

DICK MASSEY

TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY
Gene Clark
RSO 2394176
Home Run King; Lonely Saturday; In The Pines; Kansas City Southern; Give My Love To Marie; Sister Moon; Marylou; Hear The Wind; Past Addresses; Silent Crusade.

Alongside the likes of Crosby, McGuinn and Hillman, Gene Clark has long been the fallen Byrd but this album, tied in with a British tour, is likely to put things more in perspective, and gain him a fair slice of the 'cake'. If anything, at times, the album is too perfect in production and presentation, the gloss sometimes covering up the necessary guts and grit, but this unquestionably a quality release. A quick check on 'Home Run King' and 'Kansas City Southern' is guaranteed to put you in the picture.

Produced by Thomas Jefferson Kaye

MIKE STAVELEY

NIGHTRIDER
The Charlie Daniels Band
Kama Sutra KSLP 7009
Texas; Willie Jones; Franklin Limestone; Evil; Everything Is Kinda All Right; Funky Junky; Birmingham Blues; Damn Good Cowboy; Tomorrow's Gonna Be Another Day.

There's no doubting Daniels' ability as a writer and performer but whether or not you consider him to be 'country' enough is a matter for debate. The opening cut of this new LP rips into a rockish Western-Swing sound, with some raunchy vocals and bouncing honky-tonk piano, reminding one of Asleep At The Wheel. Readers with more progressive leanings will probably like to savour the album over a period of time but one can take progress a little too far. A more traditional country sound is reverted to for 'Willie Jones' and Daniels' banjo adds some pleasant 'Bluegrassy' licks to complement the track.

Frankly, I can take him or leave him — I much prefer my country to be the real thing — but certain fans will derive pleasure from the album, particularly 'Damn Good Cowboy' and the Cajun-flavoured 'Tomorrow's Gonna Be Another Day'.

Produced by Paul Hornsby

GEOFF FRANKLIN

MUSIC AMONG FRIENDS
Mud Acres
Rounder 3001
(American Issue)
Cowpoke; Done Laid Around; Darlin' Corey Is Gone; Titanic; Give Me Back My Fifteen Cents; Out Of Joint; Jackhammer Blues; Oh, The Rain; Hobo Blues; Off To Sea Once More; Fifteen Miles To Birmingham; Lonesome Pines; Prison Wall Blues; Mud Acres.

It doesn't necessarily follow that by putting a selected band of musicians and singers together in a recording studio that a good product will emerge. Mud Acres consists of Happy and Artie Traum, Maria Muldaur, John Herald, Eric Kaz, Jim Rooney, Bill Keith, Tony Brown and Lee Berg. Antecedents of this rather impressive grouping include historic names like the Kwesgin Jug Bank, Ian And Sylvia, The Blue Velvet Band and The Greenbriar Boys. These semi-illustrious pickers and grinners came together again in 1972, for the purposes of recording this album but, oh, how terribly dated it all sounds. Everything harks back to the urban folk-revival of the Sixties and whilst we have an awful lot to thank that era for, it did have low spots — and this particular album sounds like a fair imitation of a second-rate Greenwich Village coffee-house musical gathering.

Forget it.

ALAN PETTIFER

TOUCAN DO IT TOO
The Amazing Rhythm Aces
ABC ABCL 5219
Never Been To The Islands; Never Been Hurt; Living In A World Unknown; Everybody's Talked Too Much; Last Letter Home; Who's Crying Now; Just Between You And Me And The Wall, You're A Fool; I'm Setting You Free; Geneva's Lullaby; Two Can Do It Too.

I listened to four tracks on Side One and wondered what appeal the album could possibly have to readers of this magazine — and then along came the wistfully beautiful Civil War ballad, 'Last Letter Home', with its haunting lyrics and ghostly dobro. The Amazing Rhythm Aces have a habit of switching you off from the word 'go' and then, when all appears lost, they come bouncing in with a song that knocks you out of your chair. 'Last Letter Home' wreaks of death and carnage and writers Butch McDade (the group's drummer) and J. Brown Jnr. have captured the historic atmosphere of America's bloodiest war better than many traditional composers. I wouldn't be surprised if the song becomes a classic in years to come.

The remaining tracks on the first side I found to heavy by far but the album is certainly worth investing in for the sheer genius behind 'Last Letter Home'.

Side Two offers the listener — but not the Country music fan — a much more varied programme but casual browsers won't fine too much here that falls into any one category. Nevertheless, The Amazing Rhythm Aces are certainly true to their name!

Produced by Barry 'Byrd' Burton

BRUCE ANDERSON

I WANT TO HOLD YOU IN MY DREAMS TONIGHT
Stella Parton
Mint Julep 1
I Want To Hold You In My Dreams Tonight; Don't Do It Again; Long Legged Truck Drivers; When The Fire Went Out Last Night; I've Got To Get Back On The Right Side Of God; It's Not Funny Anymore; Ode To Olivia; Truck Driving Mother; You Kiss The Fire Out Of Me; The Mood I'm In.

A nice debut album from Stella but I'm afraid it didn't reach us until quite recently. *Mint Julep* is a Dublin-based label and obviously not too well genned up on the UK Country scene; otherwise we'd have received the LP last year when it was first released. Stella sure does sound like her kin, Dolly but I always said I could stand more than one Dolly Parton — and Stella fits the bill nicely.

Turns out the lady is a fair songwriter and I quickly warmed to the album. It's modern and it's good — I hope it's not too late to urge you to track down *Mint Julep 1*. I'm sure you'll enjoy it as much as I did. Stella's voice is mellower than Dolly's, although they are very similar. What a pity that *Mint Julep* weren't geared to the promotion of this album, it deserves wider recognition. If you have trouble tracking it down, drop a line to: *Mint Julep*, 120 Coach Road, Templepatrick, Ballyclare, Co. Antrim.

Produced by Bob Dean.

ALAN PETTIFER

MARY REEVES-DAVIS

FIRST LADY OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Mary Reeves-Davis & Husband

By Mike Staveley

There can be few ambassadors who follow their duties with the grace and charm of Mary Reeves Davis, and none better to help perpetuate the memory of a man destined to become a legend in our time. I must confess I was a bit apprehensive at first about discussing such a delicate subject with her, but need not have worried as she put me instantly at ease, providing me with a very open and interesting insight into the background of Jim Reeves, man and musician.

You normally find that, if artists don't want their public and private lives to overlap they tend to adopt two separate personalities, and I wondered whether she had found such a difference between the family man and the performer — *"well, of course, there was some, especially when he was doing a show. You have to be in a good mood in order to entertain other people, because they receive the way you're feeling, so he had to kinda get 'up' before he went on stage. Then, when he was at home, he would obviously be more relaxed, but the basic things of being honest and sincere about what he was doing were always the same. Jim really liked people and his interest didn't stop when he came off stage – he would stay around and sign autographs, talk to the fans and let them come on his bus."*

When an artist achieves this stature, and influences so many others in his wake, it's often hard to realise that he himself must have absorbed someone else's work and ways — *"the first one he ever heard on record was Jimmie Rodgers, and this happened when Jim was about six years old. He liked that sound very much, so I think it must have influenced him a great deal in the beginning – then there were other people later, like Tex Ritter, Wilf Carter, the Delmore Brothers ....."* Certainly a complete cross-section of styles there, with yodelling seemingly to the fore — surely Jim never adopted that technique? *"No, he didn't, but he admired it very much. I think that physically he just couldn't manage it, but then it wouldn't have necessarily fitted into the type of songs he sang."* It was much later, when Jim became a disc-jockey *("which was after we were married, when he was about 23-24 years old")*, and began playing the records of Eddy Arnold and Faron Young, that he discovered what he really wanted to do — be an entertainer, and make records of his own — *"then he quit the radio station, packed the furniture, sold the house and off we went. Luckily, we didn't have any children at that time, so I was very happy to go along with whatever he wanted to do, and help him to do it."*

Of course there was quite a difference in style between such early recordings as "Mexican Joe" and "Bimbo" and the later ballads that brought him international recognition *("in the beginning, around 1948, he made two records for Macey, a small Texas label that operated out of Houston, and did them in his normal voice. Then, the first records he made for the Abbott label, of which "Mexican Joe" was one, were sung in a high-pitched voice, because this style was very popular at the time and his producer wanted it done that way. However, he always wanted to revert back to his natural voice, and finally got the chance in 1957, when he cut "Four Walls")*, which could have meant there was a chance of him losing some of his original fans — *"Jim was always very concerned about his fans, and what they thought of him and the kind of music he was recording. He wanted to please them, but also realised that in order to stay on top you have to be innovative, and think of bigger and better things. When he first decided to record with horns and strings, it bothered him very much because, up until then, these weren't used on country records very much, but you have to expand in any business and try to guess what is coming next, so that's what he tried to do."*

Apparently, at all stages of his career, Jim put great value on the advice and criticism his wife had to offer, not forgetting the practical part she also played in his progress — *"I only went to a studio with him once, because this was his private work, but we always put in a lot of hours together before a session, like selecting the right songs and working on arrangements. He always learnt them two or three months ahead of time, and we'd sing them at home. However, I did travel around with him a lot of the time, it was a marvellous experience."*

Today, as so often happens in such cases, there is a lot of controversy over the constant duplication of material, a problem that hasn't escaped Mary's attention — *"In the States, I compile all of the product. I am very lucky to be in that position and never try to abuse it. However, I can't say to Great Britain I'd like you to release this and that, because I don't have that kind of authority, but they would have to ask my permission to pair-up a Jim Reeves album with, say one by Glen Campbell."* Also 'hot' on the books is the question of up-dating material for re-release, but this time Mary approves of the action, and actually supervises it herself — *"we are systematically overdubbing the old tracks, but there are some I would never touch because they're too great as they are. Trouble is that, if records don't sound modern today, they won't get played on the radio so, keeping the fans in mind, we try to give the stations something they'll be proud to play, instead of it being just another golden oldie. We had a record released in the States just last week, "It's Nothing To Me", which is a new overdub of a track that's only been used on an album once, and it sounds as if it had just been recorded – apart from the voice, of course, but that's timeless."*

Having lost a husband under such tragic circumstances, many women would have rightly regarded this as a private and personal grief, and resented sharing it with the rest of the world — *"I always treated Jim as two people; one, of course was my husband, which was private, the other was his career, which was international. I still treat it the same way, and have that ability to separate the two – Jim Reeves the man is dead, Jim Reeves the singer is still living, and it makes me very happy to see that his records are still wanted."* With so many business interests remaining active after Jim's death, Mary had a natural avenue of involvement, which helped keep her mind occupied during that critical period, and these activities still occupy most of her working time — *"I still have various publishing companies, and songwriters who are assigned to them. I did re-activate a record label that he started, but I didn't have the right distribution and it proved too expensive to keep going. I'm also involved with various organisations like the CMA, as well as doing community things like sponsoring little league baseball and bowling teams."* Although she now has a life and identity of her own, Mary knows that Jim Reeves will always be an integral part of it, and wouldn't have it any other way — *"I was for him and everything he did, and my role in life now is to successfully continue to promote his music."*

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CARL JACKSON
—MORE THAN A BANJO PLAYER

by Bryan Chalker

Carl Jackson has two immediate ambitions — to prove to the world at large that he's more than just a Scruggs-style, three-finger banjo picker, and to make a new album for *EMI*. Carl was in town recently, taking a few hours off during the Glen Campbell tour, and I spoke to him about his career, past, present and future.

Born in the State of Mississippi in 1953, Carl grew up to the music of Allen Shelton, Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs and they were his earliest musical influences.

"My father like bluegrass and he played banjo but I got my own style working with Jim and Jesse McReynolds when I was 13", Carl told me between sips of coke. *"I played with Jim and Jesse for five years during the summer vacation periods. At the end of summer I'd have to go back to school. I didn't get into chromatic banjo playing until the last year with Jim and Jesse, though. Jack Hicks played bass with them and we'd trade licks with each other in the bus. We had plenty of time travelling all those miles. Jim and Jesse were getting into the country trip in the recording studio with songs like 'Diesel On My Tail' but on stage we played nearly all Bluegrass. I now know how Jesse plays that mandolin — I stole his style!" (Laughter).*

Jackson is a born musician and while we talked he picked out some amazing Doc Watson-influenced licks on a battered acoustic guitar, without even being conscious of the fact that he was playing:

"You know, it's funny, I bet most people who've seen me on Glen's shows don't even remember me as his guitarist — they just recall the banjo spot I do. But I play acoustic guitar and other instruments, too".

Although a featured guest on the Glen Campbell Show, Carl Jackson's talents seem to have been temporarily by-passed by his recording company. It would be easy for him to become bitter but Carl is only frustrated that things have taken so long to develop following his one UK album release, *'Carl Jackson/Banjo Player'*, issued here in 1973 and still retained in the *EMI* catalogue.

After picking out a superlative version of 'Billy In The Lowground' on the borrowed guitar, Carl took up the story once again:

"After I left them (Jim and Jesse) *I joined The Sullivan Family — a gospel group — and played guitar for them for a short time. Then Jimmy Woodrow 'phoned me from Ohio about forming a group with Keith Whitley. We formed a band called Country Store; I stayed four days!*

"Glen Campbell came to town at that time. Larry McNeely was quitting and Glen hired me the same day. This was in September '72, I think.

"I wish you could have heard Woodrow, Whitley and me. We went into the Rome *record company's studio in Columbus, Ohio, for a studio rehearsal and laid down some stuff. But there were so many mistakes that nothing could be salvaged for release.* Rome Records *have been around for quite a while and they have acts like Hylo Brown — I haven't heard Hylo in years — and a group called Second Generation".*

Carl's UK release has been selling steadily for four years but there was a previous, much sought-after album entitled *Bluegrass Festival,* about which he had some interesting things to say.

"This was on Prize Records *in Nashville. Me and Lloyd Green were with the label at that time and the number of my album was PRS 49802, how's that for a good memory? It's unfortunate that people still just associate me with the Capitol album,* 'Banjo Player', *because I have done other things — not too many, though. The* Prize *album was a little embarrassing for me because several PD (Public Domain) tunes were included and* Prize *put my name on like I wrote them. I didn't like that. I had my own songs on the album as well — one of 'em was 'Rotation' — but anytime someone would buy a copy I'd point to one of the others with my name on and say, 'I didn't write that'. One of the PD tracks was 'Sugarfoot Rag', which was down to Hank Garland; but* Prize *titled it 'Slewfoot Banjo' and put my name to it. I was so embarrassed by that. You know, when they did that, I couldn't believe it! I'd also like people to know that I didn't write 'Bill Cheatham', 'Flop-Eared Mule' or 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown'. One track we did on that album, 'Duelin' Banjos' had Jesse McReynolds playing mandolin.*

"Another thing I did aside from the albums for Prize *and* Capitol *was Bill Monroe's* 'Bean Blossom'. *I played 'Orange Blossom Special' on that one. Making that album was real fun and for a 'live' album it was a good sound. I believe it was Bill's best-selling album.*

"It's great working for Glen Campbell. He's one of the greatest people I've met. He's done more for me than anyone in the business but I still have dreams and plans of doing things on my own. I can sing and I want people to know it. I really need a new LP. It's been so long since 'Banjo Player' *was made but they still think I just play the banjo, y'know. I've just got to show EMI that I can do something else. As far as they know picking the banjo is all I do. I want to sing material like the Eagles and Bread. Make no mistake, I love Bluegrass but there are other areas I have to try. I love listening to the Osborne Brothers, the Seldom Scene, Jim and Jesse McReynolds and, of course, Bill Monroe, but it's important for me to expand personally.*

"When I go back to the USA we have two months off from touring but we'll be recording with Bill Medley and I'll be playing guitar. The prospects for a new LP for me look good and I hope to be cutting it soon. My last one for EMI *has sold around 35,000 worldwide. In Australia and New Zealand it takes 8,000 for a Gold disc; I sold 5,500 in Australia and 3,000 in New Zealand — with promotion, which the album didn't get, I could have gone Gold!* 'Banjo Player' *has now been released in Japan and as they are big fans of Bluegrass there, it could go well. The album probably sold less back home than anywhere per population. I guess it sold around 12,000 and to go Gold there you need to sell $1,000,000 worth or 250,000 copies — and I sure didn't come close to that!"*

Carl Jackson knows he's good but not in a way that suggests conceit or supreme egotism. He merely knows his own capabilities as a musician and is bitterly disappointed that *Capitol Records* have been so slow in allowing him to develop on record. Carl is not eager to record another 'banjo' album, however; the next time he wants to be more innovative:

"I want to play everything, even rock 'n' roll guitar — that'll get 'em. But I really an ready to develop musically and I want to do it on record with Capitol".

Instrumentalists have never had it that easy, in or out of the country field, but Carl doesn't want to be tied down categorically. There's obviously a lot of music waiting to escape from this likeable young man and the sooner *EMI* get him into their studios, either here or back in the USA, the better it will be for him and his growing legion of devout followers.

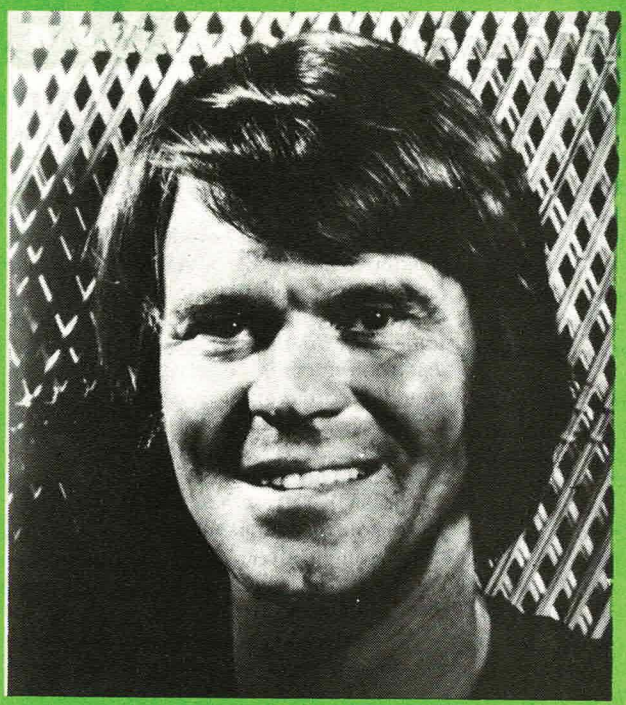
"I'd like to thank British audiences and record buyers for their support. I can't say I've been treated better anywhere else in the world than in the British Isles. I hope it won't shock them too much when I eventually come out singing, because that's what I want to do".

And knowing what he wants to do might just get Carl Jackson to the place he wants to be.

(In the meantime listen to: 'Carl Jackson/Banjo Player' — Capitol E-ST 11166)

RIDIN' HERD with the RHINESTONE COWBOY

By Mike Staveley



You could be forgiven for confusing a Press Reception with the last round-up. Every now and then an assorted bunch of mavericks gather together in the assigned corral, and dread the arrival of that fearsome trail boss whose job, at times like these, is to ride point and cut out the strays — especially those that stray too close to the guest rider!

First stage of the proceedings fell on Friday in a fashionable fun-spot near the nub of Knightsbridge where five minutes, spent fighting flash-bulbs and forcing your way to the front, is meant to give you enough time to work your way into the man's heart and soul — instead, you try digging for his roots and merely come up with a few bits of bark! After all, I wasn't really interested to know whether he and new wife Sara did actually "go *everywhere* together", or is she did make a habit of tenderly handling each new golf ball like it was a boiled egg being saved for breakfast, I wanted to check into his musical background and pick up on a few pointers from his past that would make interesting clarification.

We've all heard about the six-month stint Glen did with the Beach Boys in the mid-Sixties, but don't know how such diverse musical excursion managed to ally itself with his eventual emergence as a solo performer? We've heard that he also played with the Champs for a while — was this as an un-credited addition in the 'heady' days of "Tequila" ('58) or later, in their declining years, after "Limbo Rock" ('62); did he work alongside Seals and Croft? Has the existence of a West Coast counterpart with the same name ever led him to be Misunderstood?

Despite his apparent reluctance to accommodate such inquisitiveness and make these appearances, he certainly seemed more at ease here than on the recent 'Today' programme (maybe he was afraid Eamonn Andrews would produce his 'little red book'?), and peppered the presentation of various disc awards with good humour, claiming disappointment at Capitol having changed the sleeve of the 'Rhinestone Cowboy' album after he'd "specially borrowed Tom Mix's outfit" for the occasion! Afterwards he did reveal to me that, following his successful liaisons on record with Bobbie Gentry and Anne Murray, he was discussing the possibility of a similar venture with Helen Reddy. Also, he is keen to get on the other side of the control panel for once and following the recent second-time break-up of the Righteous Brothers, plans to produce the next album by Bill Medley. I must say, having heard that his main influences were the vividly contrasting Hank Williams and Frank Sinatra, I'm most surprised that he's managed to keep his attitude so well-balanced — it's a wonder that his tribute album to the farmer didn't come out bearing such titles as "I'm So Lonesome I Could Never Be Ashamed Of Love And Marriage" and "Take These Chains 'Way From My Door"!

The second stage of the proceedings stood in the arena of the Royal Albert Hall and, the following Monday night, an SRO audience gathered in eager anticipation of his fourth official appearance in the capital, within a space of 48 hours, and were rewarded for their enthusiasm with a superb exhibition of showmanship, his voice proving even stronger 'live' than on record, soaring effortlessly above the strains of the assembled orchestra. Unintentional 'star' of this galaxy of musicians was the second percussionist, whose intense concentration made him undisputed master of the ship's bell and chinese lantern!

Glen achieved an immediate rapport with his audience, although I did think that the delayed off-stage entrance was slightly overdone, and won my support for his impromptu efforts to show a party of latecomers to their seats. Of course, all the hits were featured (with the surprising exception of new entry "Southern Nights"), Carl Jackson disappointingly only coming to the fore with "Gentle On My Mind", and these were split by a couple of instrumental selections ("Classical Gas" and the inevitable "William Tell Overture" — he seemed determined to prove his prowess with the guitar, but the quickness of the hand doesn't always deceive the ear!) and a Beach Boys medley. The latter was undoubtedly included as a flashback to the aforementioned association but, by way of contradiction, its introduction was accompanied by a snatch of "Little 'Old Lady From Pasadena" (an old Jan and Dean hit) and the opening sequence centred on "Good Vibrations", which would have come in after he'd gone out!

For some reason, "Rhinestone Cowboy" has been widely earmarked as a resurrection vehicle of his career, closing "a stretch of almost five years when Glen could do nothing right and could never seem to record the right single at the right time" but, during the period in question (September 1970-75), he did in fact have seven singles in the U.S. Hot 100 — when you consider that this chart is proportionally parallel to our Top 20, that isn't exactly bad business! Also, when you consider that most of his best-loved recordings come from the late Sixties, his claim that "up to that point I had recorded a lot of songs that were nothing more than a load of rubbish" does seem rather strange — I'm sure that most of those present at the Hall would strongly disagree with that assessment. Of course, Glen is now a country boy with his feet very firmly placed in L.A., and anyone expecting a completely ethnic performance would have been sadly disappointed but, at least, he makes no pretensions about his position (unlike a lot of so-called country stars who travel even closer to the middle-of-the-road) and isn't about to apologise. Sure, he sometimes surrenders too easily to the charms of commercialism, and can often be guilty of overkill (like the flag-waving finale) but, in the final analysis, he stands as a supreme artist who successfully transcends all musical barriers by maintaining his respect for the 'roots of his raising'.

Country Classified

It is our intention at Country Music Review to offer yet another facility to the British scene. We have made available these headings which will be appearing in our future issues. It is an opportunity to place information about you into the hands of not only our public but also the industry for only £10.00 for the whole year (12 insertions).

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Allen Promotions, 6a Market Place, Wantage, Oxon. Tel: 02357-65861/4785

HILLSIDERS (M)
Live Promotions, Maple House, North Rd., Gedney Hill, Spalding, Lincs. Tel: Whaplode Drove 293

LARRY HINCHLIFFE TRIO (M)
Mike & Margaret Storey Entertainmentts, 38 Knowl Rd., Golcar, Huddersfield, W. Yorkshire Tel: 0484-657054/5

IDLE HOURS (M)
J. Moran, 73 Allerford Rd., Liverpool 12. Tel: 051-220-5460, & Mike & Margaret Storey, Tel: 0484-657054/5

JACK FROST (M)
Sandy Paul, 57 Leslie Rd., Aberdeen AB2 2HU Tel: 0224-494893

JACK OF DIAMONDS (M)
Frank Feeney, 9 High St., Normanby, Cleveland. Tel: 06495-5366

KIM JACKSON & THE COUNTRY EKOS (M)
J. Thrower, 48 Francis Rd., Long Stratton, Norfolk. Tel: Long Stratton 30882

ROGER JAMES GROUP (M)
Roger James, 11 Sutherland Close, Barnet, Herts. Tel: 01-440-9788 or 01-440-2823

JAMESTOWN EXPRESS TRUCKING COMPANY (M)
Dave Timothy, 44 Ty Mawr Rd., Rumney, Cardiff. Tel: Cardiff 795854

FRANK JENNINGS' SYNDICATE (M)
'The Limes', 30 Church Rd., Woodley, Reading, Berks RG5 4QJ. Tel: 0734-693860 (24 hours)

KENNY JOHNSON & NORTHWIND (M)
Kenny Johnson, 129 Tongbarn, Skelmersdale, Lancs WN8 8EL. Tel: 0695-24858, and Mike & Margaret Storey. Tel: 0484-657054/5

Clubs

SUFFOLK

FRIDAY
Ponderosa C & W Club
Fox Hotel, Stowmarket. Sec: J.P. Parsk, Jonjoy, 11 Prescott Drive, Elmswell, Bury St. Edmunds. Tel: Elmswell 40517
SUNDAY (last in month)
Grand Ole Opry (England)
Kingsway Cinema, Newmarket. Tickets from Harpers Music Saloon, 16 High St., Newmarket. Tel: 0638-2456

SURREY

TUESDAY (Alternate weeks)
Woking C & W Club
Old Woking Recreation Club, Westfield Rd., Woking. Sec: M.H. Cooper, 18 Woodend Rd., Deepcut, Camberley. Tel: Deepcut 6372
THURSDAY
Sundowners
Happy Eater, Hindhead, Surrey. Sec: Allen Jones, St. Lucia, Lodge Hill Rd., Farnham. Tel: Farnham 26326

SUSSEX

THURSDAY
Brighton Country Music Club
Richmond Hotel, Richmond Place (Opp. St. Peters Church), Brighton. Sec: Neil Coppendale, Westcroft, Western Rd., Shoreham by Sea, Sussex. Tel: Shoreham 62525 (24 hours)
FRIDAY (2nd in Month)
Chichester Country Music Club
Lavant Hall, Chichester. Sec: Tony Bleach, Bleach's Garage, Lavant, Chichester

TYNE-WEAR

MONDAY
Silver Spurs C & W Club
Millfield Club, Hylton Rd., Sunderland. Sec: G. McCarthy, 73 Palgrove Rd., Pennywell, Sunderland.
WEDNESDAY
South Tyneside Country Music Club,
The Ship Inn, 147 Sunderland Rd., South Shields. Tel: South Shields 62196. Sec: T. Forster, 135 Moreland Rd., South Shields. Bookings: Frank Feeney
SATURDAY
Hedworth & District Social Club
Boldon, South Shields Bookings. Frank Feeney. Tel: 06495-5366

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BILL ANDERSON FAN CLUB
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BRYAN CHALKER FAN CLUB
Tricia Knight, c/o 69 Hackington Crescent, Beckenham, Kent.

MAL DARON INTERNATIONAL FAN CLUB
Sec: Mrs. Pat Barclay, 34 Nicholas Rd., Easton, Bristol 5. Tel: Bristol 556211 Midland Reps: Lil & Brian Ruff, 8 Field Close, Worcester. Tel: Worcester 53785

JEANNIE DENVER FAN CLUB
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Continued on page 31

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I came to hear the music...

WEMBLEY:

Mike Staveley reviews the 3rd day of this year's event
Pictures by Brian Shelley

A great songwriter must have perception and wit, sensitivity and depth. A great singer doesn't have to display an abundance of technical skills, his most important asset is the ability to pass on these emotions to his audience, so they feel that it's actually happening to them. Sometimes, this communication is so natural that its presence is overlooked and its instigator undervalued. One such artist is Mickey Newbury.

His is not the sort of background you would expect for one so revered in this particular field — *"I didn't listen too much to country music at first, more the vocal groups like the Penguins and the Flamingoes; doo-bop music. The first group I was in was a doo-bop group called the Embers — we had two records out, one on Mercury and the other on a small label in New York. Country music didn't come into my life until much later, when I started reaching back for my roots"*. Apparently, the Mickey Newbury we know started to surface in 1963 — *"before that writing was just something I enjoyed doing, but Wesley Rose heard a tape I'd done in Houston and called up to see if I'd sign with him as a staff writer"*.

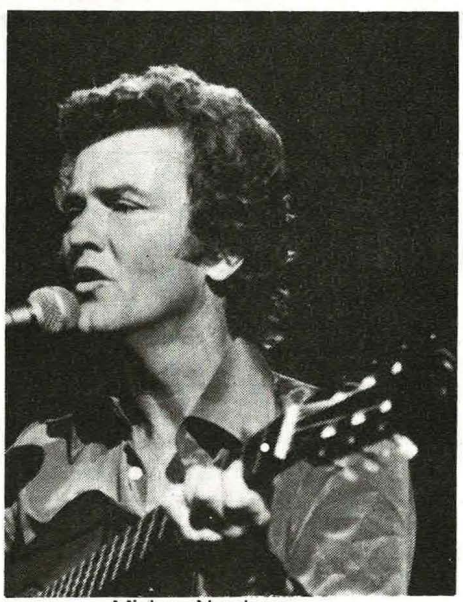
Following a solo album each on *RCA* and *Mercury*, Mickey moved to *Elektra* and finally began to establish himself as an artist in his own right, although the contemporary image of the company did have its setbacks — *"when I was with them, I could not get played on a lot of country stations, just because of the label. That's one of the things that is wrong with our business, people are so careful about looking at it in a certain way, and putting on the right kind of show. They're just play-acting"*. Now, after a series of highly-acclaimed releases, he has gone over to *Hickory Records* (*"Wesley's a good friend of mine, I've been with him for 15 years and that's why I went there"*) and brought out a new album entitled *'Rusty Tracks'*.

At the Empire Pool, Wembley, on the third night of this year's International Festival of Country Music, Mickey Newbury faced his stiffest test yet as a performer, and was certainly fortunate that Don Williams had set a precedent there for the new laid-back style of country but then, of course, he did still have a couple of musicians with him, whereas Mickey was only armed with his voice, guitar, and a handful of songs. However, when you have a voice like his, which is pure emotion, and some of the finest songs ever written, the odds just have to be in your favour. Mind you, I'm not convinced that this was the most suitable venue for such an intimate performance, and there was inevitably a certain amount of restlessness amongst the many thousands filling this arena (even to people wandering up and down the line while you're trying to watch — but this wasn't just during his performance, it went on the whole evening!) but, after he'd managed to secure the most favourable positioning in front of the microphones, he gradually got through to the majority and won them over completely.

Obviously, I would have liked to have seen him given a longer spot, considering the lesser-known and considerably weaker Larry Gatlin had been allowed 40 minutes, but his chosen method of presentation may have had some bearing on that. Still, out of the seven numbers chosen, I was particularly pleased to hear two of my special favourites, 'Lovers (*"I lived over here for three years, up until 1963, when Cliff Richard and the Shadows were very popular, and was very pleased to see that Cliff had included this on one of his albums"*) and 'San Francisco Mabel Joy', but the entire set was pure magic and, naturally enough, he finished up with 'American Trilogy' (*"this was a very controversial record, and I think that Presley doing the song kinda legitimised it. The whole idea was purely spontaneous originally, I just did it on stage one night, and it worked right off"*), and deservedly earned himself a rousing ovation which, I hope, will prompt him into re-thinking his attitude towards performing on a more regular basis, and encourage him to come back here again very soon.

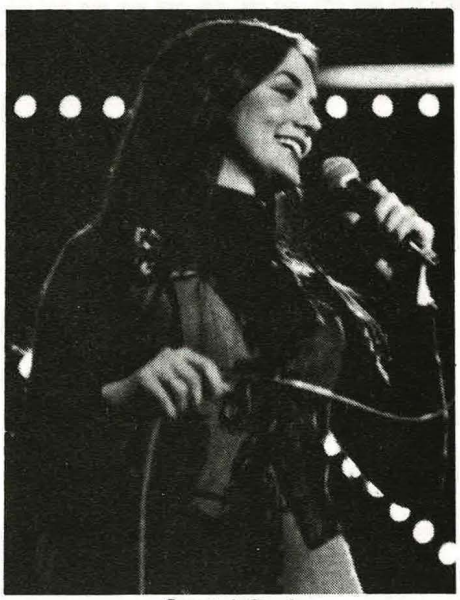
The Dillards

Next to these two, I found the most rewarding acts were Crystal Gayle and the Dillards. The latter put forward the same kind of good-humoured Bluegrass rock that won them acclaim last year and, although parts of the set were repeated and they still have a rather cack-handed drummer, they are undoubtedly an entertaining and hardworking band, featuring some really brilliant musicians who are particularly adept in their range of instrumentation. Mind you, Murray Kash's claim that they are 'America's No. 1 group' was just one of his many wild exaggerations during the course of the evening, but one thing he was right about is the assured stardom awaiting



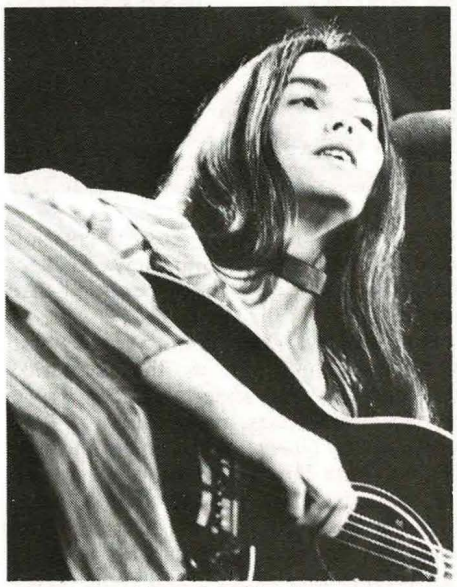
Mickey Newbury

Larry Gatlin



Crystal Gayle

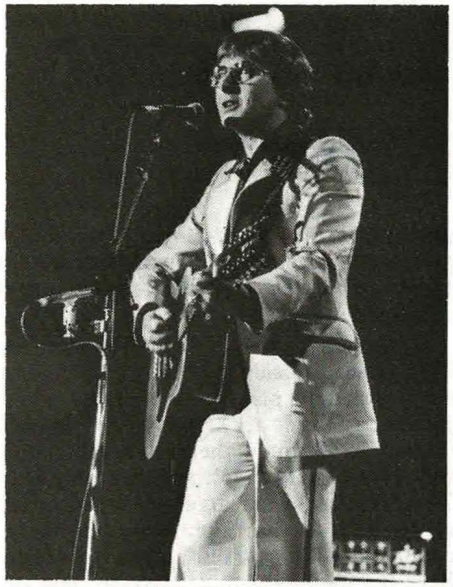
Crystal Gayle. Her poise and professionalism certainly belied her age and experience, and her voice possessed astonishing power in relation to her size, but it was always pure and never harsh. She introduced her back-up band as Peace & Quiet but, with her looks and figure, complimented by a gorgeous cascade of brown hair that she could almost sit on, she's 'quite a piece' herself!



Emmylou Harris

I wish I could say the same for Emmylou Harris. I think a straight 90-minute set from any artist can be stretching ability to the limit, however good they may be — there are exceptions, of course, but I just don't think she's one of them. Frankly, I was bored within half-an-hour! Unlike that of Crystal Gayle, her voice often was harsh and, due to the poor balance of the sound equipment, frequently lost amongst the Hot Band's output, making most of her lyrics inaudible. Unless you actually knew the songs well, you couldn't have guessed half of what was being performed, and that certainly wasn't the fault of the stadium because everyone else had sounded fine. Also, the actual delivery and structure of the set lacked the necessary fire and imagination. Fine musicians, no doubt about that, but the whole thing lacked soul and, as an act, for me, certainly didn't justify its billing.

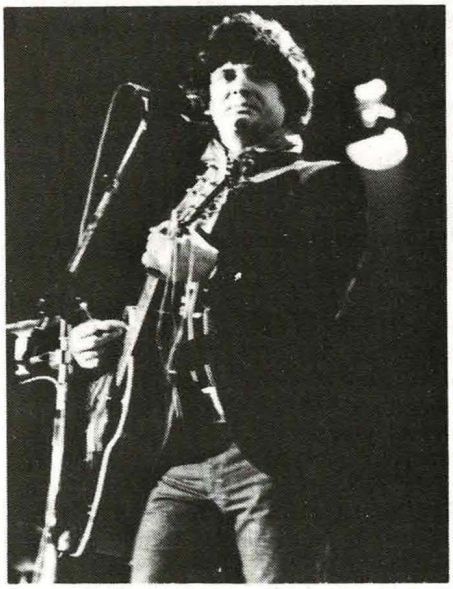
Well, that was virtually it. I did briefly mention Larry Gatlin earlier and, as indicated, although he and his brothers did some beautiful harmony work in the style of Tompall & The Glaser brothers, his songs really aren't that good, on top of which his voice, although strong, tended to be cloying most of the time, and he came across as a rather cocksure character, with more tenacity than talent. As for the British acts on the bill, despite Murray's exhuberance over the exciting talent within these shores, there was very little here to back it up. Best of the bunch were Colt 45, who attempted quite successfully to capture the supposed mood of the day with faithful recreations of hits by the Eagles and Marshal Tucker Band (rather ironically, two pot-heads had to be forcibly ejected for misuse of their sitting positions during the latter's 'Losing You'!) but, although polished, they weren't exactly innovative. Even less can be said for Lynch & Lawson, Jon Derek and Keith Manifold, they were . . . well, they were . . . there, that's what they were! If we are going to have British acts on a bill like this and, of course, we must encourage home-grown talent then, for goodness sake, let's have someone with a touch of distinction and originality, not this endless stream of second-rate copy-cats!



Keith Manifold

Certainly a mammoth show, seven hours in all, but generally speaking, one of an exceptionally high standard overall. Definitely a vast improvement on last year's presentation and, hopefully, the ever-increasing attendance for this contemporary section will ensure its permanent inclusion in the proceedings from now on.

On the face of it, there would seem to be little connection between Mickey Newbury and Don Everly, but these two artists, from entirely different backgrounds and totally removed from each other in style, have now been united under one roof — that of *Hickory Records* — and the same man was responsible for the acquisition of both — *"I've known Wesley for about 20 years now, he was A&R man at all of our early sessions, as well as being my publisher, and he talked me into going back. He said, 'let's give it a try', and we did"*. The new album, *'Brother Juke-Box'*, is Don's first in almost three years, and shows a definite change in direction from all the others (*"I've done three albums, and they're all entirely different. On this one, we just went back to the grass roots of recording in Nashville, like I did years ago, and it made it a very relaxed session. Most of the songs are ballads because I was very much into them at that time, I love singing them, I guess I'm a romancer at heart. I also like to get into good rock 'n' roll, so maybe I'll put a group together, and do some on the next album"*), one surprising feature being the inclusion of some old Everly Brothers songs, bearing in mind his previous determination to shake off the past — *"well, after two or three years away, I didn't feel quite the same way about them. I'm going to be doing 'Bye Bye Love' and stuff like that for this show but, for a while, I just didn't want to do them. It was like reading the same book over and over again, and always knowing what was coming next"*.

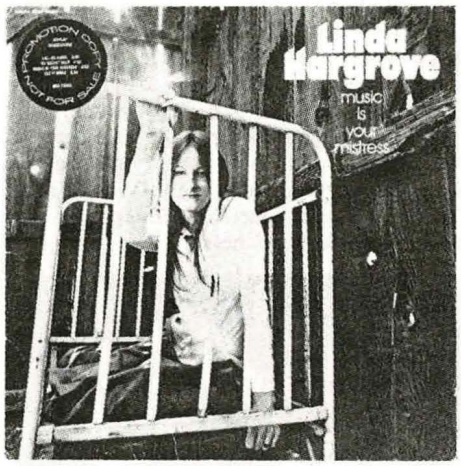


Don Everly

Although the album, *'Songs Our Daddy Taught Us'*, showed us the kind of songs Don and Phil grew up with, they were listening to other things as well — *"like Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell, even Johnny Ray. Music was a big part of my life, I enjoyed it all – Ralph Marterie and big bands, Glenn Miller, gospel music"*. Of course, one factor that really made the Everly Brothers stand out from the crowd was that distinctive harmony sound they achieved — *"it's a tradition in country music for families to sing together, and the Everly Brothers sound was just an extension of the York Brothers, the Delmores, Johnny and Jack. I think the one thing that did make us a little different was that we were also influenced by Bo Diddley, in the arrangements and rhythm sounds we were using, as well as Little Richard and Chuck Berry, it all kinda got mixed in together"*.

So, there he was, a legendary artist from the Fifties and Sixties, with a tail of million-sellers behind him, attempting to start again from square one and make a new name for himself — *"this show is really the first thing I've accepted since the layoff. I want to go out as a solo performer now, and see where it leads me, work on the records and hopefully get myself a hit. I can't retire at my age"*. It was only to be expected that, after all this time, his presentation would be a little rusty, but it certainly didn't show in the opening 'T For Texas', with Albert Lee and the Frank Jennings' Syndicate laying down a good solid backbeat for him to work on. The ballads proved a bit shaky, as he fluffed the middle eight on one of them, but the title track from his new album (very much in the vein of 'Break My Mind') separated them well, and the oldies melody ('Bye Bye Love', as promised, 'Walk Right Back', 'Til I Kissed You' and 'Cathy's Clown') really tore the place apart. Albert Lee's harmony work was no real substitute for brother Phil, but the atmosphere of the occasion helped carry it through and, although the closer, 'Mama Don't Allow' was a little corny in its concept, it suited the mood of the evening very well, rounding off a thoroughly welcome and enjoyable set.

Ever since I last invested my year's savings in a visit to Music City and other musical areas of America, I have been meaning to write about Linda Hargrove. If you are familiar with her music and have some of her four albums you'll understand why, and if you happen to pick up on one of her albums as a result of this story you'll probably never forgive me for being so lazy and delaying so long.



The unfulfilled career of Linda Hargrove...

It was one day early in June 1975 when I witnessed my first live Hargrove performance. It was an unexpected one, as so many of the best shows are, and that, I think, made the memory stand out most amongst all the shows I saw that trip. It was at the 'in' place in Nashville, the Exit-In on Elliston Place midway between Music Row, the city centre and the University area surrounding Vanderbilt. Feeling pleased with myself for having obtained free entry through a friend at *ABC Records*, which were nothing to do with either Linda or Dr. Hook, the featured band of the night, I settled down to look forward to the lunatic Dr.'s performance.

Looking around the darkened room I could see music city record company execs, reporters, expatriate English country writers like Geoff Lane, guest 'superstars' like Jessi Colter. Oh, and over in the corner Shel Silverstein was creating some kind of havoc. A normal sort of crowd for the Exit-In. The place was packed, and with its low capacity of only a few hundred that added to the atmosphere. It was going to be a good show. Suddenly, someone announced that the supporting artist was not available; I can't recall who it was. He added that we were lucky to have a replacement from "among the many stars in the audience". Just as I was muttering that I'd heard that one before, the announcer roared, "The Blue Jean Country Queen", and on came Linda Hargrove.

It was only vocal and acoustic guitar, but the sound was clear and loud and the crowded room became silent. Linda Hargrove gave a short but stunning performance of several of her best songs, "New York City Song" (a 1972 hit for Jan Howard), "City Of The Angels", "Goodbye Babylon" and "Blue Jean Country Queen". Wearing a jean suit, a bit battered, and standing tall, she looked right for her music and for the outlaw country-rock image *Elektra* were then promoting. She's a nice person, but not a 'looker', so the rapturous applause after her signature tune was definitely for the music. Then she was gone, back in the audience, and my mind was taken with Dr. Hook, one of my favourite bands. But I've seen Hook on other occasions, and my lasting impression of the night is how good Linda Hargrove was. For me, that's praise. I already owned her first, least country, album "*Music Is Your Mistress*" on Elektra, and I went right out and bought her second, "*Blue Jean Country Queen*". And for me that's praise too.

Linda Hargrove was born near Tallahassee, Florida in 1950. In her teens she learned to play piano and she soon joined a local rock band on organ. Gradually, she found she had a better talent for writing, and she took up guitar seriously. These first ones were largely slow, reflective songs, and she has later veered towards country of all kinds, but always her songs have her identity coming through; that of the independent, the loner, the girl who's a little wary of being patronised, someone with something to say and the belief that she's good at saying it. And she is.

Leaving home and moving to Los Angeles in the early seventies, Linda found her songwriting the subject of musicianly praise, and particularly from Sandy Posey, a fellow pioneer girl singer. Sandy recorded the first published Hargrove song and she also effected useful introductions to Billy Sherrill and Pete Drake. Some work as a session guitarist in L.A. for Tommy James and others was the result, and then Drake got her some jobs in Nashville. This began a friendship that has gone through her recording career to the present. In 1972, Jan Howard hit with Linda's "New York City Song" and this stimulated interest in her other songs, which were then coming off the pen prolifically. Venues such as the Exit-In began to book her as a singer all through 1972 and 1973.

Then, in '73, Linda met Mike Nesmith and played guitar on his album "*Ranch Stash*". They wrote some songs together and Nesmith recorded one of them, "Winonah". Then he introduced her to Russ Miller, who, with Pete Drake Productions supervising, signed her to *Elektra*.

The first *Elektra* album, "*Music Is Your Mistress*" contains several excellent country recordings like "The Farmer's Former Wife" and "Couples", both independent, loner songs, and "Don't Let It Bother You" on which the excellent duet vocal of Melba Montgomery is clearly audible. Overall, the album has a gentle rock influence on its rhythms and orchestration which dominates the country ingredients. It did not sell exceptionally, but Linda's songs were exposed yet further and gradually she moved deeper into country instrumentation as Melba Montgomery and Tanya Tucker, Leon Russell and others recorded her songs.

Her second, most country, and best album, which I see as the formative statement of her style and identity in country-rock circles, came out as "*Blue Jean Country Queen*" at the end of 1974 on *Elektra*. Pete Drake produced again, and the musicians and feel are total country. There are several top class atmosphere songs, for instance, "City Of The Angels", "Lonesome City Blues", and some clever theme songs like "Grandma Was the Motor", "I Don't Blame My Papa", "Country Queen" and "What If We Were Running Out Of Love". Suffice to say that I don't see how any country fan could fail to enjoy that album.

During 1975, Linda changed labels to *Capitol*, remaining with Pete Drake. Toward the end of the year, they issued "Love, You're The Teacher", an album which is not more country but more 'mainstream country', perhaps because the love theme gives up the temptation to employ more country juke-box jerker techniques of production. Anyway, "Love Was" and "Close The Door" are excellent. In the main, the songs retain the identifiable Hargrove frame of mind. The clever "Time Wounds All Heels", the atmospheric "All Alone In Austin" and the old-timey gospel "To Hear The Family Sing", they all give fresh insight into old themes. And then there is the western-swing cum rockabilly beat on "Half My Heart's In Texas". Indescribably good.

In September 1976, *Capitol* issued another album in America titled, "*Just Like You*". The content is again very country, and an ill-fated single was pulled from it, "Fire At First Sight". Capitol obviously hoped for better commercial returns and I get the horrible feeling that this could have been the last chance album. I hope not. EMI say they do not envisage issuing a solo album by Linda over here and her contract precludes the use of her material on any compilation albums. So take my advice and get one of her American albums somehow. Maybe you'll join the ranks of those of us who cannot understand her lack of success. I know it shouldn't be the case that some people are just too good, but it makes you wonder. Maybe next time?

Martin Hawkins

Doug Kershaw

CONTEMPORARY COWBOY ROUND-UP

by John Marshall

Latest triple offering from the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, 'Dirt, Silver & Gold', is a must for any Dirt Band fans and an excellent resume of the outfit's work for anyone that doesn't already have their earlier material. It really could have been titled 'The Best of, and the Rest of . . . ', containing, as it does, faves like 'Buy for Me the Rain', 'Melissa', 'Mr Bojangles', 'Some of Shelley's Blues', and virtually all the other best-known NGDB cuts, plus newies and previously unreleased items like Flatt and Scruggs' 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown', Doc Watson's 'Doc's Guitar', 'Mother Earth' and 'Jamaican Lady'. In short, magnificent. But oh the price! Eight pounds sterling, plus will likely deter a great number of potential purchasers, I'm sorry to say.

Latest US *Buddah* single from singer/songwriter Alexander Harvey is Tennessee Woman/High Roller. Due to reaction from US country radio stations the B-side is now being pushed and looks like doing well.

Latest album from the Marshall Tucker Band, 'Carolina Dreams' is being supported by a major US tour that followed on shortly after the Tucker Boys' return from their European stint. The new album features Charlie Daniels among the additional back-up sessioners and includes numbers of the usual high standard of writing and playing that we've come to expect from Toy and Tommy Caldwell. Good songs and instrumentals all well-produced. Full review should appear in next month's column.

Hank Williams Jr joined Waylon and the Waylors for a sell-out tour of concerts in Florida, North Carolina and Alabama. Steve Young supported on a number of the dates.

Most welcome news of the year is the confirmation that Commander Cody (George Frayne) is getting it back together again with a vengeance. As reported last month, the good Commander is working with what he calls 'Me and an eight-piece backing band', comprising steelie Bobby (Blue) Black and former Hoyt Axton band member Nicolette Larson, plus the Sutro Sympathy Orchestra that Cody discovered in Silver City, Nevada. With CC firmly grabbing the spotlight, the new outfit's stage act contains Lost Planet Airmen traditionals like 'Seeds & Stems', 'Ozone' and 'Hot Rod Lincoln'. One of the new band's first gigs was at the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, Texas, where the original group topped the all-time popularity stakes. In spite of a crowd that was well down in numbers on the old days the general opinion was that the new Commander Cody Band is going to be a force to be reckoned with. The Commander is reported as saying: 'Things change and the Lost Planet Airmen are gone. The eight staggering drunks are no more. Now there's only one staggering drunk and that's me'. The band played Los Angeles' Palomino a few weeks after their Austin debut and on this occasion had added another lady to the line up. The crowd is said to have raved over expected fare like 'Smoke' and 'Ozone' and a newie that appears on their upcoming *Arista* album, 'Stealin' at the 7-11. Also included in this particular set that commenced with the man himself being ushered on stage to the strains of the Bonanza theme was 'Beat Me Daddy Eight to the Bar' and the encore 'There's a Riot Going On', in which both Cody and new bass player Rob Greer reportedly acquitted themselves handsomely. Support on the Palomino appearances came from Ira Allen and the Renegades — a new name to me — who received good reviews and audience reaction that was close to that attained by the bill toppers for numbers like 'Hangin' Out' and 'Bob Wills is Still the King'.

Best from Doug Kershaw in a long while is his excellent newie that includes gems like Fats Domino's 'I'm walkin'' and Joe Turner's 'Flip, Flop and Fly', plus the Beatles' 'I'm a Loser', the latter working much more effectively than anyone would ever have thought. The tracks have been laid down in Sausalito and Macon and production credits go to Johnny Sandlin of Allman Brothers' fame. Guesting on the album are Dr John and Elvin Bishop; Doug's own group, The Sliding Juke Band, provide much of the back up work and, of course, Doug's fiddle features prominently. More details next issue. Strong possibility of a UK release, too.

A 5,000-strong capacity crowd at Austin's Municipal Auditorium whooped it up at a concert starring Willie Nelson, the Marshall-Tucker Band, Richard Betts and the Charlie Daniels' Band. The show was a benefit to raise money for Scooter Herring, former roadie to the Allmans, convicted on cocaine possession charges on the testimony of Gregg Allman.

Larry Gatlin reportedly doing very well 'on the road' with a recently-purchased Silver Eagle bus that took him and his show to Nashville on Christmas Day for his 'Grand Old Opry' appearance. His new single for *Monument* is 'Anything but Leaning' and a new album is on the stocks. Perhaps we might get to see it over here following on his deputising for Tompall at the Festival.

New release from Tony Joe White, 'Eyes', on US *Twentieth Century* is tipped for strong sales. Tinged with almost a jazz flavour, but still likely to be very acceptable to his country fans, it contains good new songs like 'Soulful Eyes', 'You Taught Me How To Love' and 'Loved By Me'. Could be worth looking up by country bands who want to broaden their repertoires.

Chuck Leavell's 'Sea Level' comes up with a selection of mainly instrumentals on their first album released on *Warners*. Although much of the material is unlikely to appeal to country buffs, there's a stack of fine picking and numbers like 'Country Fool' and 'Shake a Leg' make for interesting listening.

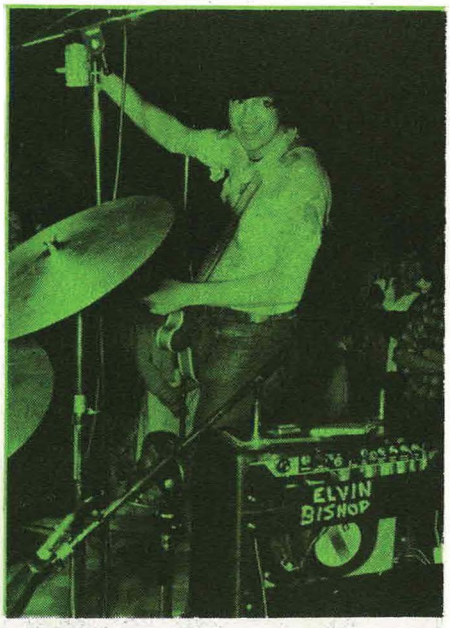
First class compilation from new *EMI* label *Hitsville*, which you will have read about elsewhere, no doubt. Good to see that one of the initial releases on the label is T G Sheppard's *'Nashville Hitmaker'* and marks his first Uk album release. His latest single in the US is a good rendition of Ben Peters' 'Lovin' On' and despite a rather luke-warm reaction from a number of reviewers on the other side of the *Atlantic*, it is guaranteed to continue his run of hits. Let's hope we get to see T G over here before too long. How about Wembley '78? Mr Conn.

Latest album from the Amazing Rhythm Aces, recorded in their Memphis studio, is titled 'Toucan Do It Too', and contains new songs from Butch McDade and Jeff Davis

US *Capitol* have culled the raunchy 'Six Days on the Road' from the talented Colleen Peterson's current album for release as a single. A good track — from an equally good album — that could do well.

Remember Jonathan Edwards? His 'Honky Tonk Stardust Cowboy' is one of Bob Powel's favourite records. I hear. Well, he has a new album, 'Sailboat', out on US *WB*, which, despite including Hoyt Axton's name among the songwriting credits is hardly likely to appeal strongly to country music devotees. However, 'Evangelina' and 'Caroline, Caroline' are a couple of appealing songs.

And while still on the subject of Emmylou, I hear that sufficient material was left over from the *'Luxury Liner'* sessions to provide a complete new album, although the word is that more studio cuts will be laid down for the next release. There is also a rumour of a live album in the offing. Let's hope it's more than just a rumour.



Elvin Bishop

On Michael Murphey's *'Swans Against The Sun'* the pounding 'Renegade', with help from Willie, Charlie Daniels, Tracy Nelson and even John Denver (yes, really!), turned out to be more than just the best track on that album. It was an indication of what was to come on his newie, *'Flowing Free Forever'*. Good hard driving tracks like 'North Wind and A New Moon' and 'Ganging Woman' — which could even make a hit single — compliment the more acoustic songs like the title track, 'High Country Caravan' and 'Running Wide Open', all of which are topped off beautifully by 'Cherokee Fiddle', the number that made the US country singles chart. In short, I have been forced to eat my words of a couple of months back and agree that this is probably his best in a while. A pat on the back for *CBS* for putting it out over here, even though their publicity handout stressed the rock elements and played down the country overtones.

Really superb solo offerings from Leo Kottke on BBC Radio 2's *'Both Sides Now'* a couple of months back. Great pity that this excellent programme only goes out on the rather fuzzy long wave, as the radio listeners missed out on much of the sound quality that the audiences thrilled to both the BBC studios and the New Victoria concert. At the latter Leo featured a wide selection of his recorded material — although hardly anything from his current *Chrysalis* release — including a couple of vocal numbers. Ton T Hall's song 'Pamela Brown' was well received by both audiences and it was a pleasant surprise to see it turn up again on the recent mid-price release from UK *Capitol*, *'Leo Kottke 1971-76'*. This excellent compilation album contains fourteen tracks selected from his seven *Capitol* releases — six of the tracks have have now been remixed — and features more than a dozen different guitars which are listed on the sleeve. Traditional numbers like 'Cripple Creek' and 'All Through the Night' get the full Kottke treatment and 'Why Ask Why?' sounds as fresh as it does on the Area Code 615 album.

Harmonica player extraordinaire, Norton Buffalo — who you will all no doubt remember from the last UK tour by Commander Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen, and recorded for posterity on the last live double set where he blows the superb harp break on Grand Mamou — has left the Steve Miller Band to front his own outfit, the Norton Buffalo Stampede, and they have signed to *Capitol* in the States. An album is due shortly.

'Gone to Texas' is the title of a new film which is reportedly beginning shooting about now. Said to star Willie Nelson as a bounty hunter and reportedly likely to feature songs of his on the soundtrack.

Latest from Jimmy Buffett, *'Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes'*, is receiving a deal of adverse criticism from some reviewers with words like 'disappointing', 'mediocre' and 'substandard' being banded around. We should have a full report for next months' column, however.

One of the sessioners on the Johnathan Edwards album turns up with his own new collection, which just happens to be the very latest from *Flying Fish*. 'Mike Auldridge' is the title and the tracks feature this dobro wizard picking up a storm. Session credits list just about everyone and include — to mention just a few — Dick Feller, Vassar Clements, Bobby Thompson, David Bromberg, Lloyd Green and so on. For me — and I suspect for a number of you, too — one of the two vocal tracks is the standout from the album. The title of this number is 'Dreaming My Dreams' and even features Emmylou Harris on the back up vocals. The other song on the album is Jimmie Rodgers' 'Carolina Sunshine Girl' and works quite well, but, as is to be expected, is overshadowed by the musicianship on the faultless instrumental tracks. Semi-pops like 'Last Train To Clarksville' and 'California Dreaming' take on a new lease of life and really do stand up well alongside a number of Mike's own compositions like 'Lloyd's of Nashville' — with the talented Mr Green on second dobro — and a magnificent version of Hoagy Carmichael's 'Georgia On My Mind'. I don't believe this album is scheduled for UK release, which is a pity, but I'm sure that if you all spoke very nicely to the lovely Sonnie Rae in *Sonet's* press office, we might manage something.

The word on the latest album from Rick Nelson and the Stone Canyon Band is that producer Keith Olsen took off half way through the studio session, reportedly because of differences over musical direction. It is possible that the four tracks they managed to lay down before the split could turn up on Rick and the band's first Epic release which is scheduled for the late Spring. Anyone wanting to catch up on the earlier Stone Canyon Band releases should keep an eye on the import and sale racks as, I am led to believe, all their material from that period is finding its way over to this side of the water at some ridiculously low prices.

New album from Jesse Winchester, recorded in Montreal with Emmylou's Hot Band, should be appearing about now. I hear it's even better than his previous work,

so it sould be one to watch out for, especially as the producer is Emmylou's recently-acquired husband, Brian Ahern. Brian's jaunt to Canada, coming so quickly after the extremely hush-hush marriage prompted Ms Harris to quip: 'We're both so busy, we're taking separate honeymoons'.

I reckon the copywriter that dreamed up the phrase 'probably the meanest outlaw ever to come out of Texas' for Waylon's latest, hadn't seen the cover of David Allan Coe's latest offering, 'David Allan Coe Rides Again' on US Columbia. The picture on the front of the sleeve shows the Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy looking meaner than just about anyone you've ever seen, mounted on an enormous chopper motorcycle with 'Outlaws' emblazoned across the petrol tank. Included among the shots on the back of the sleeve is one picture showing the whole DAC show about to hit the road, with a complete listing of all members including one 'Panama Red, 'K-9' their guard dog. K-9 — canine, get it? The album includes David's most recent US hit 'Willie, Waylon and Me' together with nine other really good tracks like the 'Punkin Centre Barn Dance', 'Laid Back and Wasted' and 'Lately I've Been Thinking Too Much Lately'. One cut in particular, 'If that ain't Country' would make a super single, but I suspect that it would be spoiled by the good bits being bleeped out. Probably David's best album to date, and I do hope CBS put it out over here.

The word is that the lovely Emmylou is most anxious to record with Dolly Parton and Linda Ronstadt, and, in fact, this reportedly would have come about for the '*Luxury Liner*' sessions if Linda hadn't been stricken with flu at the time.

Recently signed to US *Epic*, new band 'Denim' have their first album released with production credits given to John Boylon. The four-piece outfit hail from Texas, are fronted by songwriter/guitarist Bill Browder and are said to be very much in the Pure Prairie League bag. People that have seen them and heard this new release reckon they're a band we should look out for.

Don't believe the knockers that put down Charlie Daniels' latest 'High Lonesome'. I think it is probably the best ever from the CDB and it embraces country and rock in a way that surpasses anything they've put out in the past. A hard driving selection of Tex-Mex country rock western themes is how one critic described it and I would go along with this all the way. The title track, 'Right Now Tennessee Blues' and 'Running with the Crowd' all vie for best cuts, while the most obviously commercial track, 'Billy the Kid' has been selected by *CBS* for single status and really must be in with a chance.

Latest single from Michael Nesmith, 'Rio', is taken from his new album on *Island* '*From a Radio Engine to a Photon Wing*', and is doing extremely well on air play. It could even make the charts by the time he gets over here for a promotional visit.

Following her success at being voted 'sweetheart of the press', Linda Ronstadt can add a couple more awards to her impressive list. Recently a poll among readers of *Sounds* magazine not only voted her top female singer of last year, but also made her No 1 Sex Object (Female).

News is that Dan Hicks has come out of the shadows to host open microphone sessions at Mill Valley's Old Mill Tavern and is currently on the road with Country Joe McDonald.

I was very surprised — at the time of writing, anyway — that *Warners* have not put out 'He'll have to go', the old Jim Reeves song given a Tex-Mex reworking that appears on Ry Cooder's latest album '*Chicken Skin Music*', as a single. As a 45 the record is doing incredibly well on the Continent, having made No 1 in Holland. It could do well here, with a little help. And while on the subject of the truly magnificent (as everyone that saw him on the UK tour will agree) Mr Cooder, if you happen to be missing the insert sheet from his latest album, or indeed from any of his UK releases, drop a line to *Warners* in London who are having copies specially printed. It seems that the original artwork for the inserts had not been sent over when the records were being pressed and the covers printed. The reprint of the cover for *Chicken Skin Music* will contain the track listing and personnel information, so if you're buying a copy make sure you get one of the new ones. Full marks to *WEA* for taking so much trouble. It makes a change for one of the big guns to go to such lengths. Perhaps this is an indication of things to come?

At a Dr Hook concert in Huntsville, Alabama earlier in the year, the quick thinking of one of the band's road crew saved the life of a fan. Roadie Gary Doon, who was formerly a pre-med student, saw that a girl in the front row of the audience was crushed against the stage and had collapsed. He dragged her out and gave her the kiss of life just in the nick of time.

Amid continuing speculation about reforming Allman Brothers, there is confirmation that the new album from Richard Betts is completed, but whether this release — probably on *Artista* — will be released before *Capricorn* put out something from their vaults is anybody's guess.

Good single from Jim Chesnut, 'She's My Woman' on *DJM*, could have been more successful with a modicum of airplay. Still, perhaps we'll get to hear some more from the gentleman now that DJM are treating UK country fans so well with goodies from the Hickory catalogue. Let's hope so.

Another interesting single, this time on the *Capitol* label, seems to have disappeared without trace. From the Side of the Road Gang — about whom I know virtually nothing, except that they had an album available on import a while back — the titles on the single are 'People in Dallas Got Hair', which is really very funky country, for want of a better phrase, but the B-side, 'What am I doing hanging 'round', is the number that Mike Nesmith did with the Monkees way back before you and I care to remember, and the Gang's version really is very good. I suggest you grab the single quickly before it disappears completely as I have heard of no plans to put out an album.

Following his success with 'One more year of Daddy's Little Girl', Ray Sawyer — of Dr Hook and eyepatch fame — has another single taken from his new Capitol album, 'Love Ain't the Question'/'Walls and Doors', and although I do go along with much of the criticism that has been levelled at the album I don't think it's nearly as bad as some would have us believe. The next from Dr Hook — the entire group, that is — is scheduled for release any time now.

Interesting couple of records played on the fifth anniversary programme of Charlie Gillet's '*Honky Tonk*' on BBC Radio London when guest Bob Pritchett spun a very early, and exceptionally good single from Ray Sawyer, 'You Gave Me The Right', and also 'I'm Gonna Leave' by Scotty Wayne — really Freddy Fender — which is the flip of 'Only One' on the *Talent Scout* label.

Latest US single from Austin's B W Stevenson, 'Down to the Station', written by Dennis Linde, is taken from BW's new *Warners* album 'Lost Feeling'. Good slice of progressive country rock with the single track plus 'One on One' and 'Blue Water' as the outstanding tracks.

Had a couple of good reports come in on an outfit named the 'Winters' Brothers Band', who are currently recording for US *Atlantic*. Came across one of their earlier albums recently and then now have a new US single 'Sang her Love Songs' just out, written by brothers Dennis and Donnie Winters. The number is a mid-tempo ballad with rather laid-back vocals and should appeal to a number of you. Watch out for their latest album which is being given UK release status.

Looks very much as if Jimmy Buffett's latest, 'Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes' is set to be the album that finally gives him the success he has been chasing for so long. I know some critics have labelled this latest release as 'disappointing', but I think this is probably because they were expecting more in the same bag as his previous releases. From the easy-going title track to the rocker 'Landfall', there's a whole host of goodies like Jesse Winchester's melodic 'Biloxi' that builds instrumentally only to tail off to an almost acapella treatment, or the uptempo 'Tampico Trauma', 'Banana Republics' co-written with Steve Goodman. 'Fingers' Taylor, Jerry's harmonica player, turns in a number of memorable performances as does Kenny Buttrey. Recorded at Quadrofonic in Nashville and Criteria in Miami with Norbert Putnam producing, the obvious single pick, 'Margariteville', has been put out as a 45 and looks set to do well if the critics are anything to go by.

New Dr Hook album will certainly be out by the time you get to read this. Ron Haffkine again produced this latest from the boys, recorded in Nashville and rush-released in Britain and US simultaneously. Shortly after completing the session, the band took off for a tour of Australia and New Zealand, but not before taking time out for charity work. They raised more than 15,000 dollars in 45 minutes during a telethon for sufferers of cerebral palsy; and then performed a concert to raise money for a new stadium for the local high school in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee.

Quite a surprise to see the latest album and single releases from Charlie McCoy put out in Britain, but what was even more surprising was the choice of number that featured as the 'A' side of the 45 and title track of the LP. 'Stone Fox Chase', the theme from the Old Grey Whistle Test', is well-known as an Area Code 615 classic, the original of which also featured Charlie's harmonicistics. The reworking of the number adds little to the Code's version but is interesting.

Larry Gatlin's 'Broken 'Lady' received Grammy award for best country song of last year and was released in UK to coincide with his visit to replace Tompall and the Outlaw Band at Wembley.

One of the London Concerts performed by the Marshall Tucker Band and Bonnie Bramlett during their 'Straight Southern Rock' tour last year was recorded for broadcast in the US and put out to over 150 US radio stations during February. The band's latest single 'Heard It In a Love Song', taken from their latest album, 'Carolina Dreams', but is unlikely to be put over here.

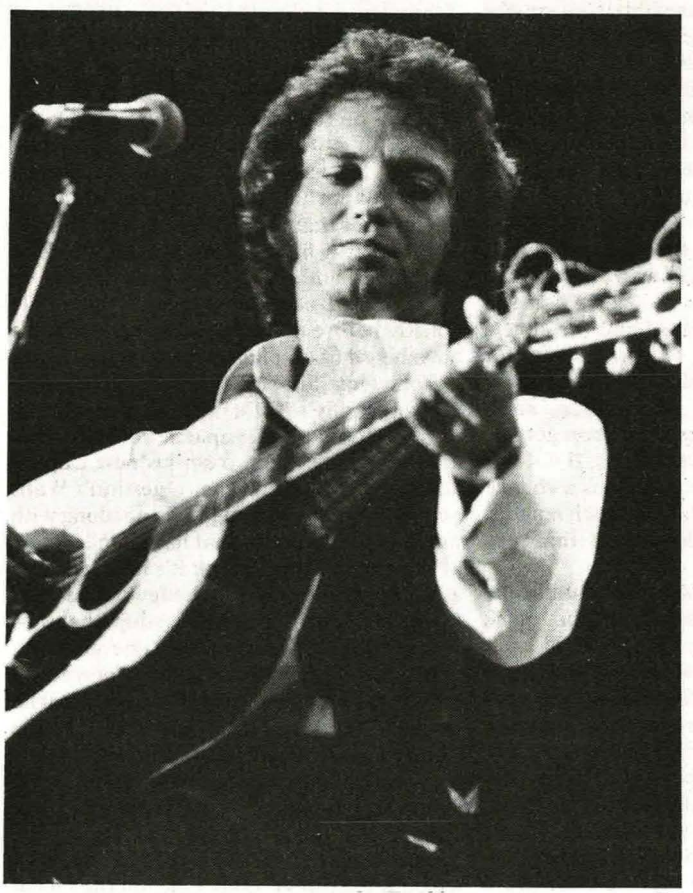
Jimmy Buffett's sets very well received at all recent Eagles' concerts on latest US tour where he was opening act.

Third and final *ABC* album release from Delbert McClinton is 'Love Rustler' produced by Chip Young. This particular collection is a shade more country than his two previous offerings and not only has been put out in UK but even a single taken from the album, has found its way into the shops although judging by the sales it has created hardly anyone seems to know about it. Best album tracks are 'Ain't No More Love', 'Let Love Come Between Us' and 'Under Suspicion' which all contribute to the raunchy barron tag that the LP has collected.

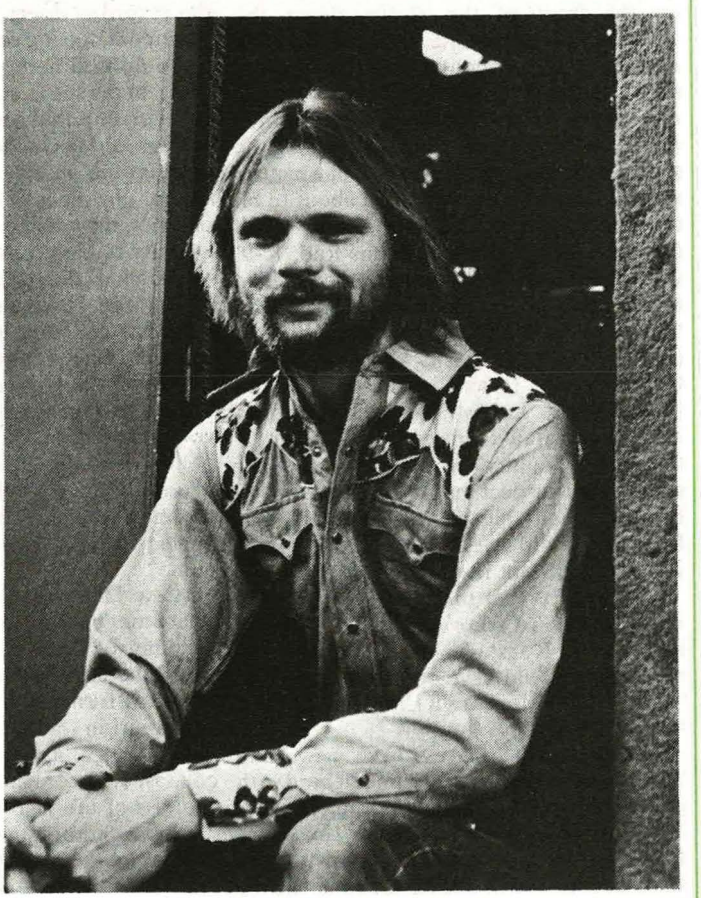
Bobby Bare handled good production job on latest US *Polydor* single from former *SUN* artist Rayburn Anthony with the Bob McDill song 'Lonely Eyes'.

Latest single from Freddy Fender, 'The Rains Came,' backed with 'Sugar-Coated Love' has both sides of this double 'A' single release taken from his new album, 'The Best of Freddy Fender', produced by Heuy Meaux. 'Rains' is the old Sir Douglas Quintet release which closely follows Freddy's current styling, while the flip is much more in the rock n roll vein we used to associate with the El Bebop Kid. Freddy has just re-signed with Huey for production and management.

Jonathan Edwards, playing a strong 50-minute support set to Chuck Leavell's 'Sea Levell' at Los Angeles' Roxy a few weeks back, was joined on stage by Emmylou Harris. Backing Edwards own



LARRY GATLIN



JONATHAN EDWARDS

vocal, guitar and harmonica work was Herb Pederson on banjo and Stuart Schulman on fiddle.

A new club, catering specifically for our kind of country music, has recently opened in Nashville. The 250-seater 'Armadillo East' was formerly Muellenbrinks and has undergone considerable remodelling which includes a fifteen feet by ten feet Texas flag as a backdrop to an elevated stage. The venue is described by its owners as a sort of low-key Texas honky tonk serving Tex/Mex food. First artist to tread the new boards was Buddah's Alexander Harvey who put on a good performance at the cocktail party that formed the opening celebrations a couple of months back. It is hoped to have named artists appearing Thursday-Saturday, with newer acts performing at the beginning of each week. Delbert McClinton and David Allan Coe have already appeared there.

Rod Hart, who did so well with the controversial 'CB Savage', headlined at the CB Convention in Indianapolis before going to Nashville to record the follow up for *Plantation* records.

New John Hartford album for *Flying Fish* has been laid down at Nashville's Sound Shop recording studios shortly after his return to the States from his very successful European tour. His 'Mark Twang' album was the winner of this year's Grammy award for best album recording in the ethnic-traditional folk category. Despite the late change that resulted in John playing support to the Boys of the Lough instead of JJ Cale at London's Victoria Palace, his own very individual versions of 'Gentle on my Mind' and the marvellous 'Golden Globe Award' were reasonably well received, along with his fiddle and banjo playing, and clog dancing. But it took the song 'Two Hite and the Joint Turns Brown' to get the audience singing along. A good show indeed.

Some really good sounds from British artistes have been turning up on BBC Radio 2's *Country Club* over the last couple of months. An excellent set from Richie Bull and Friends — the Friends comprising Pete Willsher on steel and Brian Golbey fiddle — who did wonders with 'Cripple Creek', sounding very like an outtake from an Area Code 615 session and their own 'Stoney Creek' and 'Chocs Away'. A while afterwards we were treated to Adrian Legg's 'Tarheel', a group that must surely number among the UK's top exponents of contemporary country and compare very favourably with a number of their US counterparts. Their songs like 'Landed on my Feet' and their instrumental numbers in particular work very well. I look forward to albums from both of the bands.

I hear that Waylon's talented brother Tommy Jennings has taken over the executive role of director of creative development and artiste relations with the Roger Miller Music Organisation in Nashville.

More than 1,000 Eagles fans, braving the low temperatures to queue for 36 hours outside the Cleveland Coliseum box office for the two concerts the band were playing were surprised — and not a little delighted, I should think — when the theatre management thoughtfully opened the box office several hours early to provide complimentary coffee and doughnuts. Makes a nice change in these days when most theatre managements are labelled rip-off merchants. The 3,700 available tickets were all sold in less than 3 hours.

A new club in New York, the Lone Star Cafe, is described as a Western Club featuring progressive country and rockabilly. First artiste to appear at the venue was Billy Swan who was presented with a special jacket bearing the 'Lone Star' crest.

Prior to their first European visit to appear on the Emmylou Harris tour, Asleep at the Wheel were kept busy right up until the moment of their departure from the US. Having already broadcast to Moscow by a half-hour airing of a number of their album cuts over the Voice of America, the band video taped a show, for Voice of America Television, dubbed into more than 20 languages and shown throughout the world. On one of their last personal appearances before heading over to us they were joined on the stage of Hollywood's Palomino Club by Merle Haggard and Norton Buffalo. The Wheel joined Willie and Waylon on a couple of dates at Hampton, Virginia, and Greensborough, North Carolina. They also appeared at a benefit concert in the Tulsa Municipal Theatre for the late Keith Cole, former lead fiddle player with Bob Wills' Texas Playboys. Their new album arrived a little too late to be included in this month's column, but, from what I have heard so far it looks like being another winner with cuts like the traditional 'Ragtime Annie' and their own numbers 'Am I High?' and the rockabilly-sounding 'My Baby Thinks She's A Train' as immediate standouts.

Very good reports received on a four and a half hour live programme titled 'Songwriters' Special' that was put out on Nashville's television station WDCN-TV. The show was co-produced by the TV station and the Nashville Songwriters' Association International, hosted by Nat Stuckey and Ed Bruce, and featured, among others, Linda Hargrove, Kenny O'Dell and Eddie Raven performing their own songs with no more backing than just guitar and piano.

Success of the recent tour by Dr Hook in Canada has resulted in their album 'Little Bit More' going gold over there.

Latest single from Larry Ballard is self-penned 'One More Hurtin' Song', out on US *Capitol*, but unlikely to be put over here.

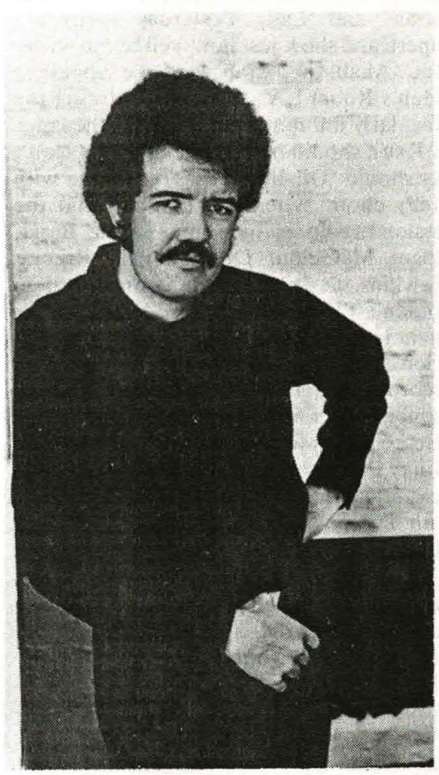
Good to see Michael Nesmith's 'Rio' doing so well. One US reviewer described that opening track on his latest 'From a Radio Engine to a Photon Wing' as a tune that sound like country rock performed in a cabaret.

US band 'Heartsfield' who have been collecting some good reviews as support act on dates with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and the Charlie Daniels Band and Michael Murphey have a new album out on US *Columbia* titled 'Collectors Item' which may appeal to a number of you.

Odd choice of best country band voted for by readers of Sacramento's *Country and Western News* for US rock outfit the 'Tubes'. Choice was reportedly made for the track 'Proud to be an American' from their current new album 'Now'.

Very glad to see Lisa Silver's name cropping up on album credits with some regularity. Latest example that I've come across has the talented young lady performing most ably on fiddle and back-up vocals for the current Parker McGhee album, where the young lady's instrumental prowess lifts tracks like 'Got that Feeling' out of a very MOR rut. Back-up work is all very well, but come on, Lisa. How about that solo offering we've been waiting for?

Ever since Willie did 'Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain', almost every artist that has tried their hand at the number seem to have turned in almost Muzak-like performances, so it was a delightful surprise to hear the vastly underrated James Donaldson Band playing a first-class version of the number when they appeared on BBC Radio 2's *Country Club* a little while back. They also did particularly well with Gordon Lightfoot's 'Never Too Close', and Allan Reynolds' 'I've Been Loving You Too Long'. A good band that seem to be fairing well on the club scene. Shouldn't be too long before we see them on a major label, I hope.



JAMES TALLEY

Pleasant surprise to see *Capitol* releasing in Britain the latest from James Talley, 'Blackjack Choir' the album that America's new first lady is reported as saying was one of the first items transferred to the White House following the inauguration of Jimmy Carter, James and his band were among the artists that appeared at the inauguration ball, and the story goes that following the arrival of the Charlie Daniels Band's equipment in a mammoth Semi, and Guy Lombardo's Orchestra driving onto the ballroom floor in a huge Silver Eagle bus, the six-piece Talley outfit, complete with gear, turned up in a Ford van and James quipped: 'Well, now they'll know the

hillbilly band has arrived'. It seems that President Carter and his wife Rosalyn are great Talley fans and have all three of his albums as they explained when the two couples met at the celebration. Although the first two albums received considerable acclaim — especially so from this column — they sold rather poorly. However, this new release is doing considerably better and features guest spots by the likes of BB King, Johnny Gimble and Josh Graves. Space doesn't permit a review this issue, but watch out for next month's contributtion.

New line up and new name for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band is John Cable, guitar, Jackie Clark, bass, joining John McEuen, Jimmy Fadden and Jeff Hanna to complete the, now-titled, 'Dirt Band'. There's a possibility that the new line up may make a UK visit later in the year.

Oh Kinky! What have you done? Just a quick listen to the kosher cowboy's latest 'Lasso from El Paso' will reveal all. The opening track, a very live, whiskey-sodden version of the excellent 'Sold American' — recorded while Kinky was on tour with the Rolling Thunder Review — starts the album off reasonably well (although this particular version doesn't match up to the title track on his first album), and 'Dear Abbie' and 'Lady Yesterday' really are superb and show just how well he can write. But 'Ahab the Arab' and the appalling 'Men's Room LA', the latter featuring the singularly unfunny Ringo Starr as the voice of Jesus, should have been left in the 'can'. As should 'Ol' Ben Lucas' complete with kiddy choir. When you consider that the session credits include most of the Band, Roger McGuinn, Dr John and Ronnie Hawkins, it's a great pity that so much talent couldn't have been used to better advantage. Especially as we know just how good Kinky is capable of coming over on record, and, in the main, with better numbers than he has come up with for this release. I look forward to a return to the old Kinky Friedman we knew and loved on his next release. Let's hope he can get together with Tompall and maybe match that first album.

'The Best of David Bromberg' has been put out in the US on *Columbia* and features cuts from his earlier albums on the label. A good buy for anyone that doesn't already have his early work. Latest photographs show that David has shaved off his trademark beard and moustache. I hear that last Christmas he was jamming with Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown at a New Orleans night spot where he was so well received that not only did he have to encore with "Will Not Be Your Fool', but was pursuaded to return a couple of nights later. His latest album, 'How Late'll You Play 'Till' is reported as being his biggest seller ever, notching up more than double the receipts of any of his previous releases.

Fantastic reception for Dolly Parton, resplendent in a pink, close-fitting, rhinestone-studded outfit, when she made her Bay Area debut at Oakland's Paramount Theatre. Featuring her new band, 'Gypsy Fever', she went through a selection of numbers that included a fair helping from her controversial 'New Harvest — First Gathering'. Opening with 'Higher and Higher' she breezed through over an hour-long performance playing dulcimer, guitar and banjo, to the delight of a very contemporary crowd that comprised more rock fans than country buffs. And how about that latest album? I know you will have read a good deal about it elsewhere, and by the time this gets into print the single 'You Are' should be nestling comfortably in the charts, so suffice to say that if you are reading this column and you don't already have a copy, do something about it, now. I've heard all about 'selling out' and 'aiming at a pop market', and I have little doubt that some mainstream country fans will shun the release. However, only time will tell whether this will be the landmark that I confidently expect it to be. Listen carefully to tracks like 'Light of a Clear Blue Morning' and 'There' and hear the treatment that has taken country music into the pop charts reaching for a new, totally original and most refreshing direction.

The sound from the Don Harrison Band on their latest 'Red Hot', although reminiscent of Creedence Clearwater Revival, may be rocky enough for followers of the latter group, and has few of the country overtones I had hoped for. The album has been put out in the UK.

Latest from US band Free Beer is 'Nouveou Chapeau' on American *RCA*, but is reportedly not as good as their earlier release. Criticisms like 'insipid' and 'heavily MOR-directed' are being used, but we should reserve judgement.

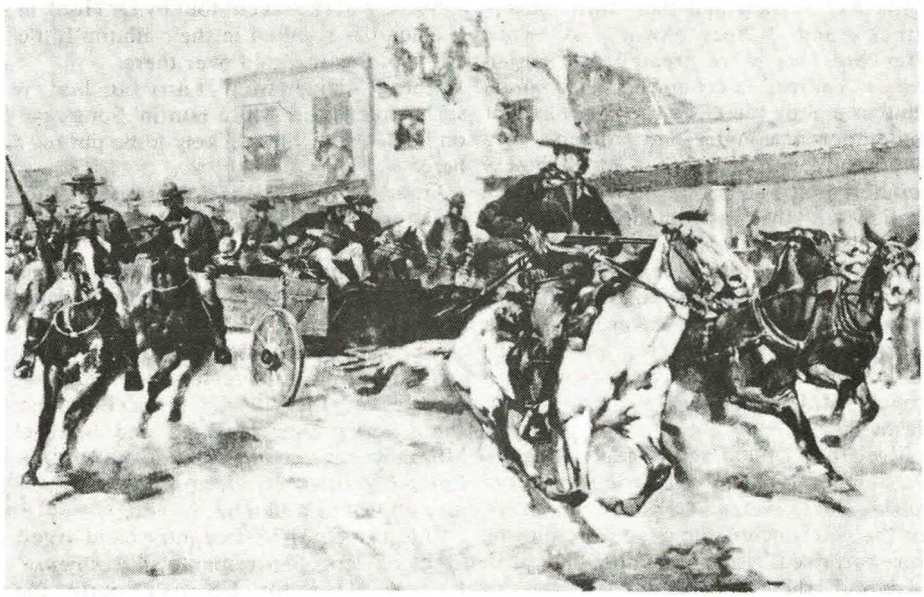
Rather disappointing collection from Billy Swan on 'Four', could possibly be the result of the ten tracks having been recorded at Muscle Shoals this time instead of Nashville where his previous albums were laid down. Most of the numbers are self-penned, but really only 'Last Call', 'Don't Kill Our Love' and the oldie 'Smokey Places' come anywhere near matching up to his earlier efforts. As before, Dennis Linde figures quite prominently on one of the songwriters credits, and also turns up playing triangle on one track. The whole album is pleasant enough and could well figure quite strongly on MOR playlists. In fact, the more I listen to the album it seems that Monument have aimed this particular collection at an easy-listening market. Great pity. But on the subject of Mr Swan, I heard an interesting version of Marty Robbins' 'El Paso' by Billy, and dating back to before his 'I Can Help' hit, which Tony Byworth featured in a *Country Club* appearance a while ago, and which seems to be finding its way over here in small quantities.

The word is that lovely Ronnee Blakely is back in the recording studios again, but, alas, only doing backing vocals for a new Leonard Cohen album. Producer is Phil Spector, so I wonder what chance there might be of him producing a newie from Ms B? Interesting thought! Ronee's appearance at Los Angeles' Roxy earlier in the year was watched by a number of celebrities including Bob Dylan. What's more we can expect to see the lady in the upcoming film 'The Private Files of J Edgar Hoover'.

'Dicky Betts & Great Southern' is the title of the latest from Richard Betts and his new band which turns up on *Arista*, confirming the reported split from *Capricorn* that we have heard so much about. A US coast-to-coaster is presently taking place with unconfirmed reports of a British visit later in the year.

Incredible story illustrating the power of some music relates how a radio station in Panama City, Florida, after playing 'In the Mood' by the Henhouse Five Plus Two — better known as the talented Ray Stevens — which consists of the old Glen Miller classic clucked, chicken-style, received a call from an irate farmer who had been working in his yard with the radio playing. Apparently his alsatian dogs had heard the record and gone bananas tearing down fences and killing a dozen chickens. The station later reported that it was considering dropping the disc — which, incidentally actually made the US country singles chart — from its playlist.

Jesse Winchester scheduled for a return to the US for a series of personal appearances and TV shows during April is reported as saying that he had hoped for his return home to be rather more personal. His latest album, 'Nothing but a breeze' planned for release to coincide with his return. A tour, with Jesse playing support to a major act was being negotiated at the time of writing.



Country Classified

Continued from page 21

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TAMMY WYNETTE Fan Club. S.a.e. details c/o Kathleen Cahill, 54 Waverly Road, South Norwood, London SE25.

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INFORMATION ON BRIAN COLL from Ireland. Mrs Pat Barclay, c/o Mal Daron Fan Club, 34 Nicholas Road, Easton, Bristol.

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A Fast Rising Country Performer... WALT MILLS

by Paul Davis

One of Nashville's most successful and prolific songwriters, Dottie Rambo once volunteered, "If anyone should ask me to pick the greatest one single new talent to come along in the past decade to the Gospel World my answer would have to be Walt Mills from Dallas, Texas. Talent is that inborn gift that God passes out to each of us when we enter into the World, but to this gospel singer, He sure smiled favourably. He takes a song that many have recorded like, Build My Mansion' and makes you say to yourself, I wonder why I can't sing like that? He reaches past the guidelines established by others and touches the song with that often sought after music called 'Soul'. Regardless of what we call it we know it is a talent being used of God to manifest His Kingdom to mortals such as you and me." . . . that is praise indeed.

Walt began his musical career in the Dallas/Fort Worth area of Texas in 1952, striving for success in Country music. Two years later he experienced Christian conversion which he describes as a 'Personal encounter with Christ', which turned his music around. In the early years of his Christian life, Walt wrote gospel songs mostly for pleasure, but in 1959 he began performing his music as a part of a full-time ministry as a touring evangelist. His crusades have taken him throughout the South, the West Coast of the U.S.A and recently to Holland as part of the Country Gospel Special' on T.V. The Rambos were quick to see his skills and recorded several of Walt's songs, and Buck Rambo was instrumental in starting him off in his professional singing, writing and recording career.

Whether singing or preaching, Walt communicates to people of all ages, motivated by a 'divine obsession to reach people for Christ.' This dedication of Spirit has been expressed in his outstanding recordings.

Walt makes his home just outside of Dallas, Texas, along with his lovely wife Betty, and their two sons, Paul and Art. It is from there that he bases his evangelistic activity.

Walt can take favourite gospel classics such as 'Precious Lord, Take My Hand' and 'Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me' and interpret them with such renewed power that one thinks one is hearing them for the first time! The excitement he creates on new, uptempo songs is a sharp contrast to the quiet contemplation of slower ballads, but Walt is at home with both moods. His own compositions such as 'Top Of The Mountain', 'When Will You Surrender?' and 'The Lord Is My Shepherd' will soon establish him as a gifted songwriter as well as vocalist. Simple guitar, piano and percussion accompaniment naturally blend with Walt's warm style.

Music and 'sharing Jesus' is a way of life for Walt Mills. His music is mellow country gospel that permeates the soul with joy and excitement, the sharing comes straight fron his heart.

Many of the songs on Walt's album were self composed and it is not difficult to predict his songwriting career may propel him into the ranks of gospel song writing giants.

The illustrious singing evangelist Jimmy Swaggart has the last word as he too joins the ever increasing band of artistes impressed by the fast rising song writer from Texas: "I have known Walt Mills for some time now and I must say it has been to *my* advantage that our paths have crossed. I hurriedly admit that Walt Mills is the most outstanding singer I know. It dosen't matter how fast or how slow, how high or how low he sings, Walt still moves me! Walt sings with the sincerity that assures me and all who hear him that he knows personally The Man he's singing about! Walt has also been called into the preaching ministry, and besides preaching and singing he plays a good twelve-string guitar. Now I'm not going to place his abilities in any certain order — but if you think he preaches good, just wait 'till you hear him sing!"

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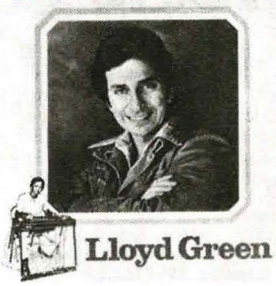

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CMLF 1001

Gloria Darling
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Larry Cunningham
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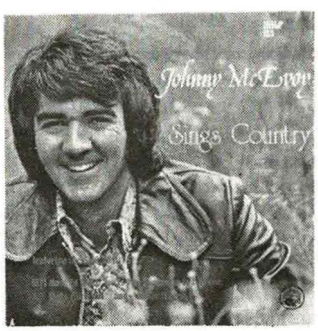

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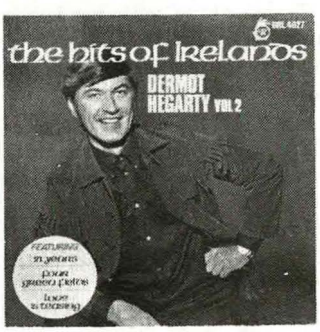

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Larry Cunningham and Margo
"Yes Mr. Peters"—
Release XRL 5002

★

"Larry Cunningham
Remembers Jim Reeves Vol. 1"
—Release BRL 4048

★

Red Sovine
"Greatest Grand Ole Opry"—
CHS 2007*

COUNTRY CLUB

Had Wembley press facilities been better organised with a thought to the British acts appearing, we might have had time to catch Jon Derek's appearance. As it was, entry into the 'Special Enclosure' wasn't allowed 'officially' until after the first act had been and gone on all three days/Gordon Davies seen enjoying many sips of Southern Comfort at the Festival's most popular meeting place; he was quickly joined by many other fans of the golden fluid/Congratulations to Mel Hague on his fine solo performance at the Harrow Country Music Club's pre-Wembley evening/Nick Carter recently made two successful appearances on US TV, thanks to the efforts of Dorothy Ritter/ Tony Goodacre is still among the busiest solo artists on the British scene/Tony Holden's Radio Thames Valley country show, *Holden's Country*, now runs for a total of four hours each Tuesday evening — from 9.00 until 1.00 am. That must stand as a record/Stan Laundon griping about certain record companies at Wembley; you can't win 'em all, Stan/Scotland's country music correspondent, Kevin Black, takes over the handling of Emerald-Gem's promotional and sales activity throughout Scotland/Ace-guitar picker Adrian Legg totally knocked out by Emmylou Harris recently; well, Southern Comfort helped him along a little — not much, but a little/Drew Taylor, fiddle player with the Frank Jennings' band, has an album out on EMI entitled 'Drew's Brew'/The other Drew Taylor, the Scot's agent, claims that Scotland was saturated with country acts this past twelve months/No apologies for the non-appearance of two acts at Wembley — J.J. Barrie and Conway Twitty/James Fox and David Montgomery put together a great country music feature for the *Sunday Times* Magazine Supplement over the Easter period/Good to see so many Dutch and Belgium fans at the Festival this year/America's Dick Woods still eagerly seeking gigs in the UK/Wesley Rose justifiably proud of Tony Byworth's Roy Acuff album compilation on *DJM*/Were there fewer Birmingham country buffs at the Empire Pool this year, or was it our imagination?/The Stewart Brothers had their PA system stolen just before Easter. With a good band behind them these lads could be first-class/Holland's A.G. and Kate met up with our editor at Wembley and made friends, in spite of the latter's rather unkind review of their first recording/Mickey Newbury spent three years at RAF Croughton during his American Airforce Service. How many people knew that?/Ray Lynam now sporting a moustache/Jean Shepard is a delight to talk to/Don Gibson reportedly had 'Bridge' trouble with his newly acquired DaQuista guitar at Wembley, hence the broken bass string. "I guess he'll have to have the guitar and fix it", said Don the next day/A note to the James Donaldson Band — we haven't received your album yet lads, but we've heard it's good/There were many reports of a higher standard of musicianship at this year's Mini-Festival. Certain Belgium radio personalities were seen to be looking in at certain acts/Were there really two Bob Powels at Wembley, or has he merely been tucking into an excess of kebabs recently?/John Ryan, of the Harrow Country Music Club, certainly knows how to look after visiting groups and artists; at the club's recent pre-Wembley get-together there was a bottle of Scotch, countless bottles of beer and a great variety of sandwiches. Nice one, John/United Artists' hospitality suite was greatly appreciated at the 9th International Festival. Thank you, gentlemen/Kenny Rogers single, 'Lucille', penned by Roger 'Blanket On The Ground' Bowling/Certain members of the press seem to think that Don Williams is uncommunicative; not so, folks, it's just how you approach him. As far as *CMR* is concerned, Don is a highly articulate, intelligent being — and a very friendly one at that/Stan Sayer, of the *Daily Mirror*, seems to be getting to grips with country lately/Karl Dallas gave Wembley some good coverage in *Melody Maker* a few weeks back. What a change to read some sensible comments from the pop press/*Record Mirror's* James Hamilton knocked-out by Crystal Gayle's performance. So were we, Jimmy/*Anchor Records* really do have a friendly press staff, commencing with Charley McCutcheon and continuing with Carol, Linda and their two tame photographers, Alan Messer and Richard 'Tricky Dicky' Young/A certain Japanese Steak House, somewhere close to Wardour Street, was the scene of a pitched soggy dish-cloth battle at Easter weekend. It resulted in a certain editor's wife cowering beneath a table to avoid a very wet, coke-soaked rag. Eventually the whole staff joined in the battle and one chubby, bearded man was last seen scuttling for safety into the road, nervously clutching a glass of cola/If Chip Hawkes likes Nashville so much, why doesn't he learn to spell Opryland properly?/Gene Watson has his first UK LP release on EMI entitled 'Paper Rosie' — and it's good/If you, like so many of us, have purchased a pair of expensive cowboy boots recently, don't do as the salesmen advise and soak them in Neatsfoot oil — you'll ruin the shine on them. Treat them with saddle soap and they'll last for years/Albert Lee enjoying well-deserved success of late/Carl Jackson is a hell of a nice guy/Redneck Redshaw turned up at Wembley sporting a Ku-Klux-Klan mask and threatened to wear it in the Special Enclosure/Dave Turner, the artistic wizard who made Bryan Chalker's superb guitar strap, is busily engaged in the manufacture of brass belt buckles still/Look out for a Carl Smith LP on DJM/Did one of Mervyn's staff forget about Lloyd Green and Johnny Gimble on the Sunday night, thereby reducing Don Williams' set to a mere 30-minutes?/Loretta Lynn is surely taking a slide these days in favour of her more tuneful sister, Crystal Gayle/What sensible UK major is going to do something about Jim & Jesse McReynolds? Don Page, who runs their Appreciation Society, has been trying to raise interest but with little success. However, it does appear that the boys will be back in Britain this year for a tour/Before promising to take British acts to the States — "and when I tell you something, you know I mean it" — Mervyn Conn should try and do something for them on their home ground. It's not enough to include them on the Wembley shows, because they are mostly used as 'fillers' and many of them deserve better treatment/Dan Warfield, of *Stars & Stripes*, the American Serviceman's daily newspaper, was in attendance at Wembley/Britain's first country music newspaper, 'Country Music Round Up', edited by Dave Mills and P. A. Kettle, is doing a fantastic job for British country music/Eddie Miller, composer of 'Release Me', among others, has died at the age of 57/Stoney Cooper, veteran fiddle player and co-leader of Wilma Lee & Stoney Cooper & The Stoney Mountain Boys who 'died' recently on the way to hospital, has succumbed to the illness that plagued him during his later years. Stoney, a native of Harmon, West Virginia, was 59 and is survived by a widow, Wilma Lee and daughter, Carol Lee Snow/Alan Cackett is to be congratulated for his efforts at keeping country music alive in Kent via the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone.

YOUR LINE OF COUNTRY

WELSH PRIDE

I had the pleasure of spending Christmas in England with my nephew George Brannon, of the *Tennessee Line* and I am writing this in the hope that it will be published. *Tennessee Line* are a Welsh trio from Newport in Gwent. My nephew wrote and told me that he had a little group but I didn't realise just how good they were. They consist of George Brannon (lead singer), Bob Brannon (lead guitar) and Mark Lolin (bass). I have lived in America for 30 years and, owning a store in downtown Ohio, I can listen to country music all day long. If I had these boys with me, I would put them on stage with any American group in Nashville. Let me tell the people who read this letter that I sure am proud to know these boys. In fact I am going to have their LP, which has just been released, played on American radio.

I sure hope the people of Wales are proud of this Welsh group, *Tennessee Line*.

Mrs. Mavis Brannon,
5163 S. Main,
Sylvania,
Ohio,
USA.

SOUTH AFRICA COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

The South African Country Music Association was formed in February, 1976, by a small group of country music enthusiasts in Cape Town, South Africa. From a slow beginning we have begun to build up a strong following and in this regard we have moved the association's headquarters to Johannesburg, our biggest city. We are now in the process of producing a monthly association magazine to give our members up-to-date information on local and overseas news.

We would also like to be able to advise our members on what overseas country magazines are available.

Country music is becoming very big in our country with new local country artists appearing all the time. Much of the interest can be attributed to George Hamilton IV's TV show and his visit to our country. We were also fortunate to have had Mary Reeves Davis visit us recently.

Buck Adams,
The South African Country
Music Association,
Poste Restante,
Lyndhurst Post Office,
LYNDHURST,
2106,
Johannesburg,
Transvaal,
Republic of South Africa.

GUNFIGHTERS

Having read your magazine, I found it very enjoyable, particularly the article about the legendary gunfight at the O.K. Corral and the singing contributions made towards it by people like Tex Ritter and Johnny Cash.

Speaking of the talented Johnny Cash, do you know when he is going to tour Britain again?

(Miss) B. Tunnicliffe,
13 Southlowe Avenue,
Cellarhead,
Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffordshire.

ED: *Sorry, no firm details about Johnny Cash yet.*

APPRECIATION FOR GEORGE & COMPANY

I should like to express my appreciation for the fine show which has recently toured the UK, namely the George Hamilton IV show. To all concerned with this production, may I say what a fine job they all did, the artists who were extremely pleasant to everyone and thanks to Mervyn Conn for getting them all together.

A special word of praise must go to our own Colt 45, who did a great job backing other artists. Pete Sayers made many converts to his brand of country, Miki & Griff were notable for their fine harmonies and humour and all this led to the undoubted stars of the concerts, Melba Montgomery and George Hamilton IV.

In my view this was one of the best packages to have toured and it made for superb entertainment. Thank you all on behalf of my wife and myself. I am sure Melba won many new fans and if they would care to send me a SAE, I would be happy to send them details of her fan club.

Don Page,
39 Thames Road,
Blakenall,
Walsall,
Staffs.

LOCAL COUNTRY STATIONS

In answer to L. Wrights query as to why space can't be found in *CMR* to list all the local country music stations, here is the feast I listen to when not working:

Monday	Justin Power, BBC Radio Manchester 6.30—7.30 pm. Joe Butler, Radio City, Liverpool 9.00—10.00 pm.
Tuesday	Billy Butler, BBC Radio Merseyside 8.00—9.00 pm.
Thursday	"Country Club" BBC Radio Two.
Friday	Justin Power (repeat)
Saturday	Billy Butler, BBC Radio Merseyside Noon—1.00 pm. Joe Butler, Radio City, Liverpool Noon—2.00 pm. Hugh Walker, BBC Radio Stoke 1.45—2.45 pm. Pete Baker, Radio Piccadilly 7.30—10.00 pm.

I think up here we have the most programmes for fans. What do others think?

Gladys Evans,
47 Victoria Road,
Wrexham,
Clwyd, North Wales.

CASH'S FAN CLUB

I am a regular reader of *Country Music Review* and have been trying, without success, to find the address of the Johnny Cash Appreciation Society. Can you help me, please?

G. Anderson,
9 Elm Street,
Alnwick,
Northumberland.

Ed: *The Johnny Cash Appreciation Society is operated by Diane & Barry Rowden, 8 Fishers Close, Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0DB.*

ZITHER QUERY

I have recently acquired a zither but am experiencing great difficulty in finding a tutor. If you have any information or guidance to offer, I would be extremely grateful.

L. J. Hoyard,
123 Tuddenham Road,
Ipswich,
Suffolk.

Ed: *You might try dropping a line to Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd., 20 Earlham Street, London, W.C.2:, they deal in fretted instruments and could be of assistance to you.*

NEWS

TENNESSEE LINE ALBUM

The Newport, Gwent-based group, *Tennessee Line*, is now under new management and a debut album is now on release on *Westwood* WRS 108. Enquiries regarding the band should be made to: M. Barrington, 28 Ruperra Street, Newport, Gwent.

COLUMN FOR COPPENDALE

Neil Coppendale, organiser of the Brighton Country Music Club, is now country correspondent for a new monthly publication called *Live Entertainment*. This will serve the area from Brighton to Bournemouth. Neil wishes to be kept informed of country music activity in the area and will do his utmost to include details in the column. Contact Neil at: Ground Floor, Westcroft, Western Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex.

NEW ALBUM FOR JOHNNY GRAND

Scots singer, Johnny Grand, has just released a new LP on the Lismor label entitled 'The Parade Of Broken Hearts' (LILP 5066), on which he features songs written by new young Scottish writers. Tracks include 'Wanna Be A Star', 'Everbody Wants To Be Somebody' and 'We're All Going Nowhere'.

BARRY HOUSTON . . . PLUS KENNETS FOR NEW ELLIE SCOTT BAND

During the last year country music trio *Western Union* have gained a considerable reputation and many fans in the clubs throughout the South. It was, therefore, no great surprise to note that when the group's lead singer, Ellie Scott, recently announced the formation of a new band she had included her old trio partner, Barry Houston, on bass guitar.

The big surprise comes in the form of a merger with popular Berkshire group, *Kennet Country*, to complete the five-piece line-up. The new band, described by Ellie as "A natural progression for Barry and I . . . and a very exciting venture", has come about through a mutual admiration of styles between the two groups. Barry Houston was co-writer, with Ray Wagstaff, of Ellie's own song 'Come On Ellie', now a firm favourite with club audiences. The band hope to feature some new material by these two talented and BRITISH country songwriters in the repertoire.

You acan see Ellie's new group in action at the following venues:

June 5th Tennessee Centre, Wimbledon
26th Double-M Club, Brack[illegible]
July 15th The Oakridge Club, Basingstoke
23rd Cotswold Valley Country Music Club

TEIFI VALLEY CLUB

The Teifi Valley Country Music Club has found a new home at the Lamb Hotel, Adpar, Newcastle Emlyn and operates every Friday.

SWANSEA COUNTRY CLUB

Artists appearing at the British Rail Staff Association Club, Prince Of Wales Road, Swansea, in the coming weeks aare as follows:

June 1st Ann & Ray Brett plus RCA Records Show
8th Cal Ford & The Brakemen
15th Jon Derek Trio
22nd Roger Knowles & John Allam
July 6th Lane Travis
20th A.G. and Kate
Aug. 10th Yvonne & Norman Champion

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COLIN CHRISTIAN &
CULPEPPER COUNTY
FRANK YONCO KIT CONORS
& EVERGLADES
JON DEREK
AL BARRETT
TOGETHER
CAMPBELL & REID

SUNDAY, 31st JULY 1977

FRANK IFIELD &
BARBARY COAST
KELVIN HENDERSON
COUNTRY BAND
MIKE SCOTT TRACEY BAND
ANN & RAY BRETT
TEX WITHERS
CLIFF WHELAN
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ANNOUNCING A VALUABLE AND EXCLUSIVE SOUVENIR of Dennis 'McCloud' Weaver's success at this year's Wembley Festival.
Exclusive to readers of Country Music Review this limited edition of Dennis McCloud Weaver busts (This is a limited edition of only 250, with bronze finish).
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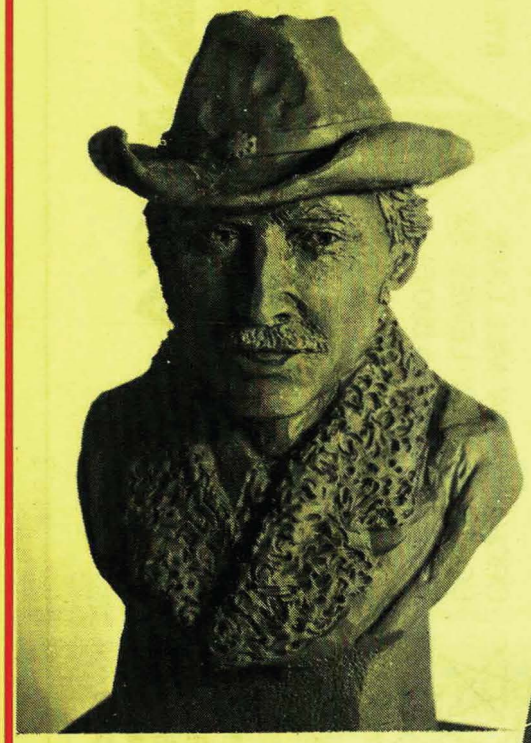
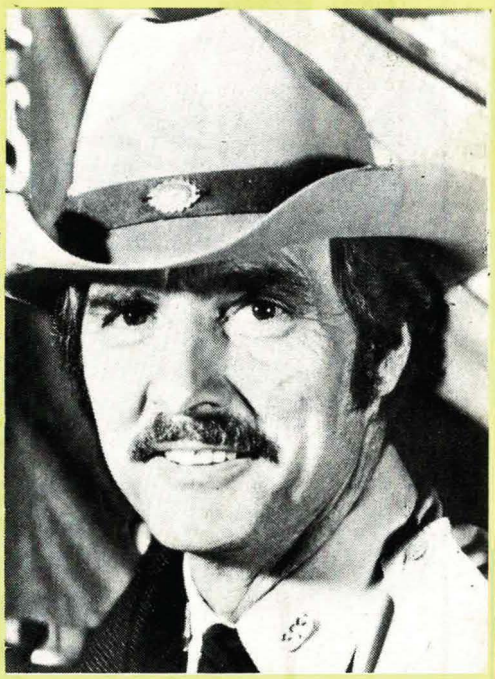


DENNIS WEAVER

The majority of British TV viewers will recognise this face as *McCloud*, the immensely popular cowboy cop. Weaver also created another famous character, that of 'Chester', in the long-running *Gunlaw* television series, which starred James Arness as 'Matt Dillon'. Since Weaver's *McCloud* has featured a considerable amount of country-orientated music in its soundtrack over the years, it was inevitable that the show's star should be called in to cut an album — and in 1975 Dennis Weaver did just that. The LP, *McCloud Country* (*DJM* DJF 20479) has sold extremely well and Dennis Weaver is now becoming accepted as a country music personality. This year the amiable character-actor/singer acts as compere

(CMR APRIL '77)

Bust size approx. 100mm.



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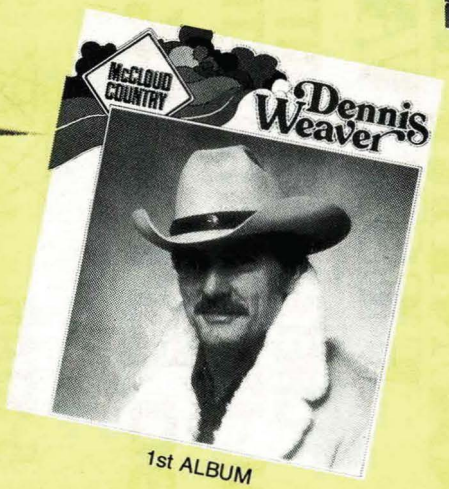
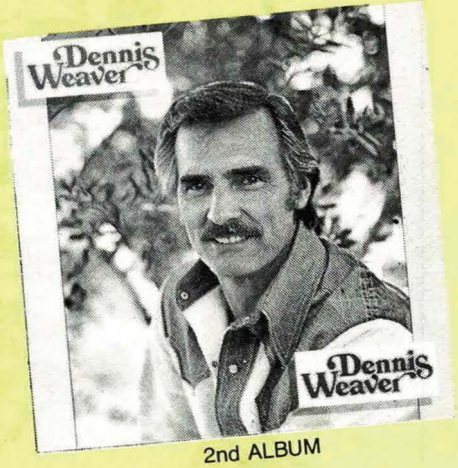


1st ALBUM



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